

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

No. 1201. Fourth Series, No. 62. 8 June, 1867.

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NEW BOOKS.

MODERN INQUIRIES: Classical, Professional, and Miscellaneous. By Jacob Bigelow, M.D. Little, Brown, & Co., Boston. [It is rather out of our walk to give an opinion on medical subjects; but Dr. Bigelow is so far above the pedantry of his profession, that his grand *Common Sense* is intelligible and interesting to everybody who has that faculty. We accidentally took up his book on Self-Limiting Diseases, some years ago, (it is included in this volume), and did not lay it down till we had read the whole work, which must have exercised great influence upon the profession. And so with his article on The Limits of Education, which begins this volume, and which should be read by all Presidents of Colleges, and by all who have sons to send to them. Busy as we are we shall read the whole volume.]

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PEACE.

Is this the Peace of God, this strange sweet
calm ?
The weary day is at its zenith still,
Yet 'tis as if, beside some cool clear rill,
Through shadowy stillness rose an evening
psalm,
And all the noise of life were hushed away,
And tranquil gladness reigned with gently sooth-
ing sway.

It was not so just now. I turned aside
With aching head, and heart most sorely
bowed :
Around me cares and griefs in crushing
crowd ;
While only rose the sense, in swelling tide,
Of weakness, insufficiency, and sin,
And fear, and gloom, and doubt in mighty
flood rolled in.

That rushing flood I had no strength to
meet,
Nor power to flee ; my present, future, past,
My self, my sorrow, and my sin I cast
In utter helplessness at Jesu's feet ;
Then bent me to the storm, if such His will.
He saw the winds and waves, and whispered,
" Peace, be still ! "

And there was calm. O Saviour, I have
proved
That Thou to help and save art *really* near ;
How else this quiet rest from grief, and fear,
And all distress ? The cross is not removed,
I must go forth to bear it as before,
But, leaning on Thine arm, I dread its weight
no more.

Is it indeed Thy peace ? I have not tried
To analyse my faith, dissect my trust,
Or measure if belief be full and just,
And therefore claim Thy peace. But Thou
hast died,
I know that this is true, and true for me,
And knowing it, I come, and cast my all on
Thee.

It is not that I feel less weak, but Thou
Wilt be my strength ; it is not that I see
Less sin, but there is pardoning love with
Thee,
And all-sufficient grace. Enough ! And
now
I do not think or pray, I only rest,
And feel that Thou art near, and know that I
am blest.

—*Sunday Magazine.* FANNY R. HAVERGAL.

KNOCKING AT THE HEART.

ONE bid me turn aside,
Saying He had a message I could hear
Best in some quiet place ; but as I went
I heard the busy voices of the world,
And, listening to them, answered in my pride
That I had ears for both, and was intent
On keeping all my old companions near.

He called me once again,
Pleading that He had precious things to say,
Which He desired that I should understand ;
Things which He might not tell to other men.
I said, that if I were too long away,
I could not join my company, and then
Should lose my place of honour in the land.

He told me I was ill ;
That He this time had chosen for His call
Because He saw my labour was too much,
And that I greatly needed to be still.
I answered, I was strong enough for all
That I had planned that morning to fulfil ;
And so again shook off His gentle touch.

And yet I suffered sore :
My eyes were dim with weeping all the night ;
A heavy burden preyed upon my mind ;
I dared not look on the long way before ;
I dared not look on the dark way behind :
Glad morning could not bring my spirit light ;
The way of hope and peace I could not find.

I am grown wiser now,
And sadder, with the knowledge of my loss
Of all the holy words I might have learned,
Of counsels whose sweet comfort would not
cease.

Oh, if, alone with Him, I had but turned,
Had bowed in meekness 'neath the bitter Cross,
And found it change to blessing and to peace !

He is not far away ;
For still, at intervals, I hear His voice ;
I hear His footsteps coming to my door
Sound sweeter than the music of the day.
Enter, O Lord ! Oh ! speak to me once more,
And I will list each word that Thou canst say
As humbly as a child, — and will rejoice.

—*Sunday Magazine.*

ELPIS.

From the Quarterly Review.

1. *The Nightingale in the East*, 1854.
2. *John Bull and the Taxes*, 1865.
3. *The Reform Battle in Hyde Park*, 1866.
4. *Stop the Beer on Sunday*, 1860.
5. *Be Merry on Christmas Day*, 1866.
6. *Grand Conversation on Napoleon*, 1830.
7. *The Lakes of Killarney*, 1840.
8. *Spencer the Rover*, 1827.
9. *Work, Boys, Work*, 1861.
10. *The Oakham Poachers*, 1819.
11. *Müller's Lament*, 1860.
12. *What do you think of Billy Roupell*, 1861.
13. *The Road Hill Murder*, 1861.
14. *Wonderful Mr. Spurgeon*, 1860.
15. *Shakspeare's House*, 1858.
16. *Death of Lord Palmerston*, 1865.
17. *Church and Chapel*, 1859.
18. *Answer to the Protestant Drum*, 1852.
19. *Elegy on the Death of Prince Albert*, 1860.
20. *The Prince of Wales' Baby*, 1861.
21. *A Night in a London Workhouse*, 1866.
22. *A Catalogue of Halfpenny Ballads* (500), 1866.
23. *Dreadful Accident on the Ice in Regent's Park*, 1867.
24. *The Lions in Trafalgar Square*. 1867.
Price, One Halfpenny each.

ANDREW FLETCHER of Saltoun once said 'he knew a wise friend who believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads of a nation, he need not care who should make the laws.'* Ingenious M. Meusnier de Querlon, too, once seriously projected the writing of the history of his country by a chronological series of Songs and Ballads; and, beyond a doubt, honest Andrew's words contain a considerable amount of truth, however difficult his more airy Gallic neighbour might have found it to make his history a complete one. We can well imagine the effect of such glowing impassioned words as

'Scots wha ha' wi' Wallace bled'

on the hearts of a band of Scotch patriots; or of the 'Marseillaise'

'Aux armes, citoyens, formez vos bataillons,
Marchons, marchons, qu'un sang innpur
abreuve nos sillon'

* These well-known words have been variously attributed to men as different and as wide apart in every respect as Robert Burns and William Cobbett. But there is no doubt that they belong to honest Andrew. Vide 'Political Works,' 266; and Whately's 'Bacon,' p. 175. Fletcher died in 1716.

on the crowd of hungry savages who hastened to 'The Feast of Pikes'; with what lusty throats, when King Henry came back from Agincourt, the men of London city shouted

'Owre kyng went forth to Normandy
With grace and mygt of chivalry,
The God for him wrought marvelously,
Wherefore Englonde may call and cry
Deo gratias : *'

or, how, one and all, throughout Cornish land, the brave hearts and sturdy lips of the people, when their favourite Knight was in durance vile, made the country-side ring with

'And shall they scorn Tre, Pol, and Pen,
And shall Trelawney die?
Here's twenty thousand Cornish men
Will know the reason why.'

There have been Ballads and Songs in every age of every civilised country, which gave utterance, not simply to the noble thoughts of some rapt minstrel or inspired bard, but to the deep and passionate longings, the undying patriotism, the heroic patience, the invincible courage, the sublime self-sacrifice, the rapture or the agony of a whole people; and it was this that lent immortal fire and music to the lips of the singer; though his verse may have lacked the martial splendour of Macaulay, or the smooth and subtle strength of Aytoun. So far, therefore, we may well endorse the dictum of worthy Mr. Fletcher; and still be a long way from making Acts of Parliament out of Ballads. But there comes a time in the history of every highly-civilised people, amid all the golden fruits of Religion, Philosophy, Art, Poetry, Science, Discovery and Wealth, with the baser results of Luxury and Refinement, when the Nation no longer speaks as a whole. The classes that in a simpler age were more or less one, or bound together by the tie of common duties, needs, and pleasures, become selfish and distinct. Each begins to have its own heroes, poets, teachers, maxims and favourite rules; and then, amid the clash of conflicting creeds, the jargon of schools, the cries of hungry ambition, the lofty reasonings of the philosopher, the proud flights of science and of song, the insatiable cravings of increasing wealth, and the dreams of self-indulgence,—among the great, the mighty, the rich, and the prosperous,—the words of the lower and poorer classes pass unheeded and almost unknown beyond their own immediate circle.

* 'Percy's Reliques,' ii., 22.

And yet this very circle, narrow as it comparatively is, in the midst of a great country like England, and in the heart of the mightiest city in the world, has its own pet heroes, poets, and teachers, its own favourite maxims, sayings, and rules; and, above all, its own Literature: with which few but the multitude of ardent disciples have any real acquaintance. Of that Literature Mr. Catnach* and his successors, Disley and Fortey, are the High priests; Seven Dials is the shrine; while the question of authorship in the majority of cases is as great a mystery as that of the Homeric poems themselves. As to the shrine, it was known and famous as long ago as the days of 'delightful old Vinny Bourne'—as Cowper affectionately calls him—and even then as the seat of Song—

'Qua Septem vicos conterminat una Columna,
Consistunt Nymphae Sirenum ex agmine
binæ.'†

The 'Column' has long ago given way to a far more sightly and useful building, and the ragged sirens with their cracked voices and wearisome importunities must be now looked for in the crowded recesses of the New Cut. But the ground is still sacred, Catnach is still the presiding genius of all the neighbouring grimy streets, and the Literature, though somewhat fallen from its ancient glory, includes that wonderful domain of 'Halfpenny Ballads' to which we are now about to introduce our readers; forming, more or less, a separate class by themselves; distinct, as will be seen, in subject, style, and beauty. We have now before us a catalogue containing five or six hundred of these Ballads, and out of them, with considerable care—as choice flowers out of a dainty garden—about a hundred have

* The most elaborate production of 'Jemmy Catnach,' as he was popularly called was, 'An Attempt to Exhibit the Leading Events in the Queen's Life, in Cuts and Verse,' price 2d.; printed on a folio sheet adorned with 12 cuts, interspersed with verses of descriptive poetry, and bearing date Dec. 10, 1821. Catnach was then at the height of his fame as a printer of ballads in Monmouth-Court, Seven Dials, where he spent a hardworking, busy life, and died in 1840, *stat.* 49, having amassed a fortune of 10,000*l.* He was the son of a decent north-country printer, and began at first with a small shop, and a small trade in halfpenny songs, relying for their composition on one or two of his 'bards,' and when they were tipsy, being driven to write himself. During the Peninsular war, and specially at the time of Queen Caroline's trial, his business had increased so enormously as at times to require two or three presses going night and day to keep pace with the demand. At a later period he turned his attention to the 'Gallows' Ballads, and here he reaped a golden harvest. He retired from business in 1830, and was succeeded by a Mr. Fortey.

† Vin. Bourne, 'Poemata,' p. 61.

been selected, of which two dozen are named at the head of this Article. No mere selection, indeed, can give a true idea of all their varied beauties, or even of the innumerable topics on which they touch; so lofty is the flight of genius, so various are the themes which poesy seizes on, ennobles, and makes her own for ever; but we have done what we could in the difficult task, and those ardent readers whose thirst shall be still unquenched must go themselves to the fountain head.

The Ballads may be roughly divided into about eight classes, 'Famous Men and Women,' 'Historical,' 'Modern Events,' 'Religious,' 'Miscellaneous,' 'Murder,' 'Political,' 'The Royal Family.' The modes of treatment are so curious, the metres employed so lawless, the beauties and the blots so many and so unexpected, that the difficulty is where to begin and what to select. The critic is fairly distracted by the infinite variety that besets and captivates him. The only way, therefore, in such a garden of roses, is to begin boldly, pluck the first flower that comes to hand, and arrange the bouquet as we best may. We turn, therefore, to 'Famous Men and Women,' and light at once on the fair name of Florence Nightingale, as 'The Nightingale in the East.' It's a far stretch from 'Seven Dials' to the Crimea, but the poet, nothing daunted by the greatness of his subject, thus plunges boldly in *medias res*, —

'On a dark lonely night on the Crimea's dread shore
There had been bloodshed and strife on the morning before,
The dead and the dying lay bleeding around,
Some crying for help — there's none to be found;
Now God in his mercy he pitied their cries,
And the soldier so cheerful in the morning do rise;
So forward, my lads, may your hearts never fail,
You're cheered by the presence of a sweet Nightingale.*'

There is a fine abruptness in the three opening lines, but in spite of the rough music of the second, the whole picture is at once before the reader's eye; and in the midst of dead and dying heroes, some silent for ever, and some crying madly for help in their last agony, is the poet's fit occasion for obeying the great canon of 'Nec deus interstit, &c.,' and making a bold dash for

** In every extract from these ballads care has been taken to quote most exactly, *verbatim, literatim*, — and if it were lawful to say so,—*punctuatissimum*.

the heroine in the closing line. Stanza II. tells us that 'this woman was sent' from Heaven to succour the brave, that her eyes beam with pleasure, as some wounded ones are brought in with fever 'and life almost gone,' while

' Some with *dismantled** limbs, some to fragments is torn : '

but, all keeping up their spirits, and hearts that never fail, in the presence of their sweet Nightingale. Yet, in utter defiance of this horrible scene of carnage and confusion, the grim woodcut at the head of the Ballad represents our fair countrywoman as seated cosily by the side of a downy four-post bed, and handing a Basin of Hot Gruel (with Brandy in it beyond all doubt) to a stalwart but 'dismantled' Dragoon, propped up with pillows and looking the very picture of easy comfort.

The name of Florence Nightingale is graven deeply on the hearts of the English people, and far and wide over the world, wherever the English language is spoken, goodness, and valour, and beauty are proud to claim kindred with her; but we doubt whether she ever reached a prouder apotheosis than —

' The soldier's they say she's an angel from Heaven,
Sing praises to this woman, deny it who can,
And all women was sent for the comfort of man ! '

Our next hero is Mr. Spurgeon, who for the last few years has probably preached more sermons, in better English, in spite of their slang, with a mightier voice, to a greater number of thousands, in a larger Rotunda, than any other young man of the age. All ages, ranks, and classes, have been found among his audience, from the days of the front rows and half-guinea reserved seats at the Surrey Music Hall, to the present free seats at the Tabernacle; critics, embryo orators, profound admirers, and ungodly scoffers, ladies of fashion, unbelievers, and Christians of every known shade, have all 'sat under' him. So great is his eloquence, that in the words of our poet

' He can please the duke, the lord, the squire,
And ladies with gold lockets,
He can make the very sovereigns jump
Out of old women's pockets.'

* Another version of this ballad here has '*mangled*', but *dismantled* is clearly the true reading.

So mighty is the thunder of his eloquence that,

' If Spurgeon went into St. Paul's
I'm sure he'd not dissemble,
His voice would make the dome to rise,
And St. Paul's church for to tremble.'

So winning are his persuasive powers, as to make guineas fly from the closest of 'buttoned pockets'; to rouse his hearers to the heights of 'kingdom come,' or sink them to the depths of troubled anxiety about 'their poor souls,' or as our poet again expresses it,

' An't he the one to harass ? '

In the great days of his Exeter Hall performances, when the Tabernacle was not yet built, Mr. Spurgeon is said — though the story is probably mythical — to have delighted and amazed his great band of admiring disciples by sliding down the balusters of the rostrum (from which he preaches), from the top to the bottom, to illustrate the fatal ease with which man slides into the pit of destruction, while 'sliding up again'** was to symbolize the difficulty of winning his way back to the path of virtue. Action, gesticulation, and frantic ejaculations of the freest kind, were among the favourite weapons of these oratorical displays, and it is probably to some well-known and favourite resort of this kind that the bard alludes when he says,

' He can look above and look below,
He can deeply sigh and groan, ah !
He can shake the rocks and swallow the whale,
He's a greater man than Jonah.'

No wonder, therefore, that

' This wonderful man surprises the land,
Parson, lawyer, snob and surgeon,
From every place they run a race
To the wonderful man call'd Spurgeon.'

At the head of this Ballad, there is a facetious woodcut, which to Mr. Spurgeon must have been a bitterness 'beyond that of aloes itself.' For, if there be anything in this life which Mr. Spurgeon hates, despises, and holds in pious abhorrence — it is a bishop; and here he is, at the top of this half-sheet, arrayed in full episcopal robes, in all the atrocious splendour of a full-bottomed wig, crowned with a mitre, lawn sleeves, a pastoral-staff in his right hand, and a bag of 30,000*l.* in his left;

** ' Sed revocare gradum . . . ,
Hic labor, hoc opus est.'

while, with indignant foot, he tramples on the words, **THE BILL!*** This is very hard on the reverend divine, though he simply shares the luckless fate of the 'illustres Viri' of the 'Nuremberg Chronicle,' which, according to Dr. Maitland, was finished in July, 1493, and, 'that those who could not read the text might study, and be edified by, the pictures of cities and of illustrious men (*tum civitatum tum illustrum virorum*)' was adorned with woodcuts on almost every page.† As in the ballad a bishop in *Pontificalibus* stands for, and is the effigy of, Mr. Spurgeon; so in the famous 'Chronicle,' one and the same woodcut, at folio 52, stands for Hosea, Sadoc, and Scipio Africanus; further on, for Juno and the prophetess Hulda; or, at a later page, for Zephaniah, Aesop, Aulus Gellius, and John Wycliffe! So, therefore, wonderful Mr. Spurgeon must be content to share the common fate of all reverend persons whose fame reaches the poet of Seven Dials, and be handed down to posterity under the guise of a jolly bishop in lawn sleeves, trampling on reform.

In passing on to 'Lord Palmerston' we come to a kindred subject; for the Preacher of the Surrey Rotunda was said to have been a great favourite of the late Viscount, who 'sat under' him more than once. All know how popular the Prime Minister was, and how widely his loss was felt; we are not, therefore, surprised to find his elegy enclosed in a broad border of black, and seven heavy stanzas of dolorous rhyme devoted to his memory. Whether the poet is affected by the greatness of his theme, or fairly swallowed up in grief, it is hard to say, but his usual sprightliness and flow of verse seem to have utterly forsaken him. His poem is an unbroken wail of the flattest and dullest monotone. Thus it opens—

' You sons of Britannia,
In silence now weep,
For the loss of that statesman
Who in death's arms do sleep,
For that noble Lord Palmerston
Briton's deplore.
The glory of England
Alas is no more.'

* This effigy must clearly have been drawn to illustrate the conduct of some Right Rev. Divine in 1832.

† Maitland's 'Essays,' pp. 83, 84. So, in an early copy of Fox's 'Martyrs,' a single woodcut represents two different companies of six burned at different places and times; and the same picture serves for Margery Pooley, martyred, at p. 1524, and Cicely Ormes, at p. 1835.

Mourn Briton's, mourn,
And in silence deplore
For the glory of England
Who now is no more.'

There are seven stanzas of this kind, but none rising above the dead level of Tupperian bathos, informing us (among other events) that 'he was born in October, seventeen eighty-four, that good able statesman who now is no more!' that he has been useful to England, to his country, to his Queen, to all foreign nations, who all 'felt the loss of the late Sir Robert Peel, but will miss "Pam" far more;' that Great Britain is lost in grief, and Victoria our Queen so 'quite overcome' when the news reached her —

' That she said my good statesman
Alas, is no more!
Lord Palmerston's gone
To that still silent bourne,
To his Queen and his country
He can never return.'

Step by step in his doleful strain the bard thus leads us on, and then with Shakespearian art having reminded us of

' That undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns'

he closes his sad flight with

' We hope now Lord Palmerston
To glory is gone,
The twentieth day of October
He was just eighty-one.'

Cordially joining in this last pious aspiration for the welfare of departed greatness, we reach the grave of the warlike Mr. 'Tom Sayers' who, also,

' Is gone to that silent bourne,
Where he must lay till the judgment day,
No more he can return.'

Of whom also the poet, in the fierceness of his grief, with a fine defiance of rhyme and a spondaic exuberance in the second line, further sings, —

' At his residence in Camden Town,
Alas! Tom Sayers died!
On the eighth day of November
Eighteen hundred and sixty-five.
Tom is by all lamented
Since his equal none can find,
Tom expired in the prime of life
At the age of thirty-nine.'

Mr. Sayers, the poem further tells us, 'was born at Brighton, where passed his youthful days,' was twelve years a pugilist, fought 'sixteen hard battles, and only once was beat,' his last victory being over 'the bold Benicia Boy ;' no one could speak of Tom 'with envy or disdain,' though 'now he's gone' to a land where, alas ! his knowledge of the manly art of self-defence will be useless.

But we must hasten on ; merely quoting, ere we go, a single verse from 'Robert Stephenson's gone, God rest him,' which informs us that

' He died like a lamb, did that wonderful man
Generations to come will long bless him,
Up aloft he has gone, never more to return
The Father of Railways, God rest him.

Signed, JOHN MORGAN,
Orchard Street, S. W.'

We notice this stanza, not only because we have a new simile instead of the invariable 'still, silent bourne,' but because it is the only ballad out of all the five hundred which bears the author's name.

Our next half-sheet, headed 'Shakespeare's House,' is altogether so singular, that we despair of giving our readers any adequate idea of what it is like. It was clearly written, many years ago, when a great outcry was raised against the notion of some Yankee speculator coming over to England and buying up the house of 'Sweet Will' for Barnum's museum. It starts in indignant passion that such a desecration should have been even thought of ! 'to mutilate Nature's learned home' —

' A spot renowned before and after death ' —

would be a national disgrace, and rouse the whole world to join in the bitter, though mysterious chorus of

' Profanation, degradation, — Oh England, thou art a tardanation !'

' It seems, indeed, impossible to the bard that! England could ever sink to such a depth of infamy ; yet, he continues in a strain of fine sarcastic irony, ' Let it go, let it go, let the Jews get hold it, let Yankee Barnums' prowls along those sacred walls,'

' — our Shakespere needs no fame,
'Tis but a house ! a house ! what's in a name ?
Let it be sold, or in the sea be tossed —
His love and mighty labours ne'er will be lost.
(Cho.) Altercation, dilapidation, — Time steps in
and cheats the Nation.'

Under our second heading of 'Historical,' we have a dozen or two ballads, the titles of which sufficiently indicate their several subjects. The poet confines himself to no one kind of metre, and occasionally soars above all the restraints of rhyme ; ' for though metre,' says De Quincey, ' is naturally and necessarily adopted in cases of impassioned themes, for the very obvious reason that rhythmus is both a cause of impassioned feeling, an ally of such feeling, and a natural effect of it ; yet interrogations and passionate ejaculations are no more than natural when metre has attuned the mind for such effects ; ' and thus the poet is often hurried away into utter forgetfulness of all technical rules ; but for the most part the style of verse is hum-drum itself. For example, 'The Battle of Boulogne' thus opens :

' On the second of August, eighteen hundred and one,
We sailed with Lord Nelson to the port of Boulogne,
For to cut out their shipping which was all in vain,
But to our misfortune they were all moored and chained,'

and after crawling heavily through six or seven like stanzas, winds up with a single verse, which reveals in the most bare-faced way the drift of the whole poem, viz., to draw money from an admiring crowd for the benefit of the six 'dismantled' mariners who on a Saturday evening may be found in the New Cut or Leather Lane, each without arms or without legs, but all possessed of stentorian voices, and all with dismal potency howling out

' And you that relieve us, the Lord will you bless,
For assisting poor sailors in the time of distress,
May the Lord put an end to all cruel wars,
And peace and content be to all British Tars.'

But these impostors are well known in the profession as belonging to the thieves' kitchen ; and we are bound to add that, throughout the whole range of ballads, there is scarcely another trace to be found of the Muse's degradation to the baser purposes of mendicity. ' The Battle of Algiers,' in ten fiery stanzas, is a much more honest composition ; and, inspired by a grim wood cut of a yacht and a schooner under full canvas, and a river steamer gallantly leading the way headlong into a group of lofty ship-ping, thus boldly the poet begins :

'Come all you Britons stout and bold that love
your native land,
Rejoicing in our victory, Lord Exmouth gave
command;
Lord Exmouth will your rights maintain as
you shall plainly see,
How we fought like lions bold, to set the
Christians free.
You British Tars be steady, and maintain
your glorious name,
You'll ever find Lord Exmouth to lead you
into fame.'

As far as mere facts and dates are concerned neither Nelson nor Exmouth have cause to complain, and both are extolled to the skies as true British heroes; but 'The Duke of Marlborough' in our next ballad has just cause of complaint in being made to sing a song of five stanzas on his death-bed from a wound at the Battle of Ramillies (1706) where both his horse and his aide-de-camp were shot 'all by a musket-ball';* whereas we know that John Churchill fought at Oudenarde in 1708, at Malplaquet in 1709, and died in his bed at Blenheim in 1722. The bard is clearly at sea as to his facts and his chronology, for he makes the battle take place at night, and during an earthquake, in the reign of merry King Charles II. who had been quietly buried in Westminster Abbey twenty-one years before, when Marlborough was only thirty-five years old, but had just won his laurels under Turenne. The ballad is addressed to —

'You generals all and champions bold
That knock down palaces and castle walls,'

and coming from the mouth of one who had been guilty more than once of treason and perjury both to William of Orange and to James, offers to its more special audience some singularly inappropriate advice in this final verse —

'Now on a Bed of sickness laid
I am resigned to die,
Yet Generals and Champions bold
Stand true as well as I;
Take no bribes, stand true to your men
And fight with courage bold,
I have led my men through smoke and fire
But ne'er was bribed with gold.'

Our next section of 'Modern Events' is characterised throughout by such a general

* This is founded on fact: for when Marlborough was in the act of mounting a second horse, the head of Col. Brienfield, his aide-de-camp, was carried off by a canon-ball as he held the Duke's stirrup.

sameness of treatment as to need few examples by way of illustration. They are clearly written, for the most part, hastily, on the spur of the moment; and though they may command a good sale at first, they do so not by the wit, beauty, or aptness of the verse, but by the absorbing interest of the calamity which it describes. Thus, say, an appalling accident happens in London; the news spreads like wildfire throughout the city, and gives rise to rumours, even more dreadful than the reality. Before night it is embalmed in verse by one out of five or six well-known bards who get their living by writing for Seven Dials, and then chanting their own strains to the people. The inspiration of the poet is swift, the execution of the work rapid, * but the pay is small. 'I gets a shilling a copy for my verses' (says one) 'besides what I can make by selling 'em.' But the verses are ready and go to press at once. A thousand or two copies are struck off instantly, and the 'Orfle Calamity' is soon flying all over London from the mouths of a dozen or twenty minstrels, in the New Cut, in Leather Lane, Hounds-ditch, Bermondsey, Whitechapel, High Street, Tottenham-court-road — or wherever a crowd of listeners can be easily and safely called together. If the subject admits of it, two minstrels chant the same strain,

'In lofty verse
Pathetic they alternately rehearse,' †

each taking a line in turn, and each vying with the other in doleful tragedy of look and voice. A moment suffices to give out in sepulchral accents, 'Dreadful Accident this day on the Ice in Regent's Park,' and then the dirge begins —

'You feeling Christians, both high and low
O listen to this sad tale of woe;
On that fatal Tuesday boys and men so brave
In the Regent's Park met a watery grave.
Their cries were dreadful — see the parent's
wild,
O God of Heaven in mercy save my child!
For the ice gave way, the people lined the
shore
Upwards of fifty sank to rise no more.'

* How rapid may be judged from the following fact. On Thursday, Feb. 21, a woman named Walker was brought before the magistrate and charged with robbing Mr. F. Brown, her master, a publican, to whom she had offered her services as a *man*. She was sent to prison, and there her sex was discovered. The next morning, at 10 A.M., two men and two women were singing her personal history and adventures in the New Cut, to a large but not select audience, under the title of 'The She Barman of Southwark.' It was great trash, but sold well,
† C. Lamb's translation of V. Bourne.

(*Then in full chorus from both voices*)
In Regent's Park, O hear those dreadful cries,
They sank that Tuesday never more to rise.'

The dismal horror attending on a dozen such verses shouted out *con spirito* in the midst of a busy thoroughfare, spreads rapidly, and the crowd thickens as they stand agast, all intently listening, and all eager to buy, whilst

— ‘patulis stant rictibus omnes’ *

at shop doors, and at open windows, old people and young, drinking in every scrap of the doleful strain, and on tiptoe to catch a glimpse of the minstrels in the crowd as the pathos deepens at the words —

‘O see that father how he stands so calm
The Boy on his shoulder, the girl under his
arm,
Don’t let him die, that father good and brave
The Boat has reach’d them, Oh ! thank God
they’re saved.’

Such a ballad is sure to be popular, and unless the weather is unusually cold or wet, a couple of active singers will dispose of twenty or thirty dozen copies in a single day. And in this way an edition of 5,000 or 10,000 soon runs off, to the extreme advantage of Mr. Catnach, if not to the immortality of the poet.

Other topics in this class, such as the ‘Norwich Festival,’ ‘The Wreck of the London,’ ‘A Night in a London Workhouse,’ and the ‘Yelverton Marriage Case,’ or ‘The Lady beat the Soldier,’ are, for the most part, so alike in point of general treatment, that one specimen exemplifies them all. Here and there, indeed, in the dull, dead level of commonplace, a single, solitary line sparkles up to the surface, as where alluding to what the famous ‘Amateur Casual’ went through in his Night at Lambeth Workhouse, the poet says

‘So he went through his degrees like a blessed
brick †
Thro’ scenes he had never seen before Sir,
So good luck to him I say, forever and a
day,
For bestowing a thought upon the poor
Sir.’

But this is altogether an exception to the rule, and nothing can be duller or more

* V. Bourne’s Poem, ‘Seven Dials.’

† Mr. James Greenwood, indeed, not only deserves infinite praise for thus heroically ‘graduating at Lambeth,’ but for having so called public attention to the infamies of the workhouse as to rouse the feeling which has culminated in Mr. Hardy’s admirable legislation.

prosaic than the heavy lamentations which he pours forth over the ‘Loss of the London,’ or more trumpery than the vulgar smartness of ‘The Lady who loved her Father’s Groom.’ Making but one more quotation from ‘The Trafalgar Square Lions,’ we must leave ‘Modern Events.’ Here again we have a spark of humour. No sooner are the Lions in their places than they catch sight of the monster on the top of Northumberland House —

‘They shouted, brother pray how do you do ?
Put down your tail and quickly come down,
And Trafalgar Square we will gallop round.
Oh, no ! said the other, that game won’t do,
I’m known here my friends far better than
you,

I’m aristocratic, my boys, I tell you true,
Sir Edwin Landseer’s Lions.’

We pass on, therefore, to the next division of our subject, the ‘Religious Ballads;’ and here we come upon an entirely new stratum, and with one step dash headlong into the raging waters of religious controversy between the Protestant and Romish Churches. With the exception of a single sheet, which contains ‘Patient Job,’ and ‘The Hymn of May,’ all the Ballads are clearly the work of a red-hot Irish Papist, armed with all the resources of an unscrupulous tongue, and a mighty zeal for conversion.’ A verse or two from ‘Job,’ and ‘The Hymn of May’ will at once show the character of the milder Protestant muse. Both compositions are in the same metre, both evince the same lofty contempt for rhyme, and both are so entirely to the same tune, that they might well pass for parts of one poem. If ‘Job’ says —

‘Come all you worthy Christians
That dwell within this land,
Who spend your time with royalty,
Remember you’re but man.

* * *

Be watchful of your latter end
Be ready when you’re called,
There’s many changes in this world
Some rises and some falls’ —

the ‘Hymn of May’ promptly replies with equal gravity —

‘The life of a man is no more than a span
He flourishes here as a flower,
We are here today and tomorrow we’re gone
We’re all of us gone in an hour !’

The other Religious Ballads seem to be importations from County Cork for the express edification of the lower orders of Irish

Papists, who yet haunt the grimest dens and courts of Whitechapel, St. Giles's, and the New Cut. One of the finest flowers of the bouquet is entitled, 'Answer to the Protestant Drum,' in which the poet apparently replies to some attack on the Romish Church, which has roused his anger to the highest pitch of fury. The whole eleven stanzas are one long, blazing, rant against the Reformed Church, and everything connected with it. Every word of that Church against the Virgin Mary is 'heinous and blasphemous,'—

'She is honoured by Christians, despised by
Philistines,
And insulted by those of the Protestant
Drum.'

For those who insult her the very hottest corner in the hottest of all imaginable places is scarcely warm enough,—

'Where is Luther and Calvin in — they're all
burning.
They're calling for aid, but they can't find
no aid.'

And thus with a string of double negatives, that seem to him of almost Grecian potency, he pursues his hapless victims through all the torments of chains, flaming fire, and raging thirst, until he comes to King Henry VIII. As for the Reformation, it was 'Satan who invented it'; but 'King Harry' was in all the wickedness his grand aid and abettor, and is now in the hottest place with Luther and Calvin. And not only was he head and chief in all wickedness, 'the curse of the land,' but guilty of incest, and the author of all the intolerable woes which the word Orange has wrought in Ireland. 'Young Nancy,' whispers Satan, 'is charming, by all means take her, and get rid of poor, doating Catharine,' and so it came to pass that —

'King Harry, Anne's father, who wed his own
daughter
T'was from his cursed lust that Orange
first sprang,
But what may we wonder when churches he
planned.
And then march'd to Hell with his Protes-
tant Drum.'

No wonder, therefore, that when this monstrous arch-heretic's life came to an end, and having 'started for the next world he called on St. Peter to let him in,' pleading that he was the champion of the Reformation, and a great English king, he met with a flat denial,—

'O King, says St. Peter, the curse of the na-
tions
You denied Pope and Popery, and that you
have done,
So fly from those gates, and down to —
straight
And rattle away with your Protestant
Drum.'

Having thus demolished the Protestant Church, Bluff King Hal, and the Reformation in about ten stanzas, he disappears with a grand flourish of trumpets —

'So now to conclude and finish these lines
I think I have answered the Protestant
Drum,
If God in His mercy would open their eyes
They'd all become Catholics every one.'

Meanwhile, until that desirable time shall arrive, we must be content to pass on to our next section of 'Miscellaneous' Ballads, of which, however, we almost despair of giving our readers any adequate notion by mere extracts. We wander from grave to gay, from lively to severe, from boisterous fun to faint satire, to touches of mild sentiment and mysterious bathos, until we fancy that all the blazing metaphors and fiery denunciations of the 'Protestant Drum' school must be an entire myth. Yet they issue from the same press, and find a sale among the same appreciating admirers. What pensive housemaid, in these perilous days of crinolines and 'chignons,' could withstand the fascination of a Ballad beginning thus :—

'One morning serene as I roved in solitude
For to view the magnitude of the ardent
way,
The warbling choristers sung most enchantingly
With their sweet melody tuned each-spray.
And there I saw a form most rare, bright and
majestic,
In blooming attitude she did appear,
 &c. &c. &c. &c.'

It is fairly entrancing to hear of a maiden whose cheeks were roses, eyes serene, distilling balmy dew, 'fairer than Pandora, or Venus, Juno, Dido or Diaphy,' * the centre of graces, 'the goddess of harmony'; no wonder, therefore, that Betty's hand is in her purse,

'Audit, et excurrat, nudis ancilla lacertis'

in a trice she has the precious Ballad safe in the recesses of her pocket. Or, suppose

* Daphne (?)
† V. Bourne, 'Poemata.'

Betty married to Splitfig the grocer at the corner of Leather Lane, and in matronly dignity standing at her husband's shop-door, how can she turn a deaf ear to such blandishment as

'I sing in praise of woman, and it will not you surprise,
For I can prove a woman is an angel in disguise,
My mother was a woman, my father was a man
For he always said a woman was the glory of the land.
The God bless the women, speak well of the women,
May Heaven bless the women, they're the glory of the land.'

For, not only is woman an angel, a jewel, a treasure, not only may she wear a crinoline 'big enough to cover half the street i she thinks fit,' — but the wretch that strikes his wife

— 'may perdition be his doom
May she beat him with the fire-shovel up and down the room.'

Many a warning story has been written on the dangers of poaching, but it would be hard to set them forth in a more pointed light than Mr. Catnach in 'The Oakham Poachers.' There is a reckless defiance of all the laws of rhyme in this ballad, in entire accordance with the lawlessness of its heroes, though not quite in unison with the attendant woodcut which represents a very respectable old gentleman, with his wife and children cosily taking tea at a round table.

Here and there among sorry rhymes we stumble upon an old friend, as 'The last Rose of Summer,' or, 'Let Fame sound the Trumpet,' 'Time has not Thinned thy Flowing Hair,' or 'The Bay of Biscay'; and still more rarely on a stanza of real poetry, such as 'Come into the Garden, Maud,' which reads oddly enough on the same page with 'The Labouring Man' in ten verses of this kind

'To please you all, I do intend,
So listen to these lines I've penned
About the labouring man.'

'Village Regulations' is a sentimental retrospect (much after the fashion of some of Mr. C. Dickens' musings) of 'My Boy-hood's Home;' and not without a faint sparkle of wit, — thus at v. 2,

'When I saw the little wooden bridge my heart beat with joy
Where I used to fish with benten pin and bit of thread when I was a boy,
There was the same lonely milestone over which I used to leap,
Grazing on the hill stood Old Farmer Granger's sheep,
Further on there were three barns, five cows, a dunghill, and two hayricks,
A pigeon house, one cock, four hens, and five little chicks,
A pump, a horsetrough, two swans, six ducks to be seen,
Ducking their heads and their goslings in a pond that looked muddy and green.'
Chorus. Regulations, &c.

'Ivy up every house, nasturtions all round the back,
Large geraniums well cultivated with five green leaves and two black.
One coach yard paved with stones that look like petrified kidney potatoes
One inn, two public houses, three fourpenny shops, and no waiters.
Besides, there's one great mansion I've kept back for that I cannot bear
It's the Poorhouse I mean, and I hope and trust none of us may ever go there.'

From the domain of sentiment, beauty, and romance, we now pass to the ghastly regions of crime, especially that of 'Murder,' which no less a critic and philosopher than Thomas De Quincey has treated as 'one of the Fine Arts,' and made the subject of one of his most brilliant Essays, but which here comes before us in all its naked deformity; in spite of some considerable variety in the mode of treatment. Of these 'Dying Speeches and Confessions' we have thirteen before us, stretching from the famous murder of Maria Martin by W. Corder in the Red Barn (1825) down to J. R. Jeffery's murder of his little boy in October, 1866. Many of these are clearly by the same hand, probably one of the five or six well-known authors, who also chant their own verses in the streets. 'I gets,' says one of the fraternity, 'I gets a shilling a copy for the verses written by the wretched culprit the night previous to his execution.'* 'And I,' says another, 'did the heleyg on Rush. I didn't write it to horder; I knew that they would want a copy of verses from the wretched culprit. And when the publisher (Mr. Catnach) read it; "that's the thing for the streets," he says. But I only got a shilling for it.' It's the same poet as does 'em all,' says a

* Mayhew's 'London Poor,' vol. iii.

third authority, 'and the same tip; *no more nor a bob for nothing.*' This was paltry pay under any circumstances, but still more so when we find from Mr. Mayhew that in the case of the chief modern murders these 'Execution Ballads' commanded a most enormous sale; thus,

'Of Rush's murder . . .	2,500,000 copies.
Of the Mannings . . .	2,500,000 "
Of Courvoisier . . .	1,666,000 "
Of Greenacre . . .	1,666,000 "
Of Corder (Maria Martin) . .	166,000 "

So that Catnach must have reaped a golden harvest for many a long day, even if sold to the street patters or singers at the low rate of *3d.* a dozen.

The 'Dying Speech and Confession Ballad,' strictly so called, is said to have been unknown in the trade until the year 1820,* when a change in the law prolonged the term of existence between the trial and death of the criminal. 'Before that,' says a street patterer, 'there wasn't no time for lamentation; sentence to-day, scrapping to-morrow, or, leastways, Friday to Monday.' And with regard to this matter of time, it must also be noted that many of the most popular Ballads being composed on the spur of the moment for the purpose of being sung while all London is ringing with the event, all niceties of rhyme, metre, and orthography have to be utterly disregarded.

As far as can be ascertained, the sale of Ballads in Rush's case far exceeded that of any now before us. Even that of Müller did not amount to more than forty or fifty thousand copies—though no modern murderer ever surpassed it in atrocity, or in the profound interest which it excited throughout England. And this difference is no doubt to be explained by the fact that since Rush's day the daily penny newspapers have almost forestalled the Halfpenny Ballads by giving a full account of the different enormities in all their minute and hideous details. The force of public opinion, too, thus

* The street singers say so; but in the 'Roxburgh Ballads' there are many professing to be written by criminals, from which we take a single verse:—

'I am a poor prisoner condemned to die,
Ah wo is me, ah wo is me for my great folly,
Fast fettered in irons in place where I lie
Be warned young wantons, hemp passeth green
holly.
My parents were of good degree
By whom I would not ruled be.
'Lord Jesu receive me, with mercy relieve me
Receive O sweet Saviour my spirit unto thee,'" Luke Hutton's *Dying Lament*, day before he was hanged at York, 1650.

† Mayhew's 'London Poor.'

exerted through the Press, has been brought to bear on the question of crime, and much of the morbid sympathy which found expression in the case of such a monster as Rush, had died away in 1864, when detectives tracked Müller across the Atlantic, and brought him back to be hanged by an English hangman, in the presence of an English mob. To every one of the murderers, Constance Kent at Roadhill House, Jeffery, Forward at Ramsgate, and the Pirates of the 'Flowery Land'—one and all alike—stern justice is meted out with inflexible severity. The wretched girl who at Salisbury confessed her crime to the judge, makes no excuse for her guilt, but tells only of the intolerable remorse that would give her no rest—

'My infant brother so haunted me,
I not one moment could happy be.
And if for the murder they do me try,
I declare I'm guilty, and deserve to die.'

'Scoundrels,' 'malefactors,' 'villains,' are the gentlest names for this Newgate gallery, and the gallows in every case is promised, with a sort of grim satisfaction, that augurs strongly for a deep popular belief in the justice of those solemn words, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'

'The Political Ballads are ten in number, of which seven are devoted to the special subject of Reform, the ridicule of 'Johnny Russell,' and the express glorification of 'Gladstone, Beales, Bright, and Co.' The remaining three are 'John Bull and the Taxes,' 'Stop the Beer on Sunday,' and a 'Political Litany on the Present Session of Parliament,' amusing enough in their way, but of which a verse or two will amply suffice as specimens. 'John Bull and the Taxes' is probably a new edition of an older prose ballad, which dates as far back as Washington Irving's Sketch Book, and in fourteen brisk stanzas strings together the innumerable articles on which a hungry Chancellor of the Exchequer lays his iron hand, after the following fashion:—

'They are going to tax the butter
And they're going to tax the eggs,
They are going to tax the three-cocked hats
And tax the wooden legs.
They will lay a tax on everything
You have to keep you warm,
They'll in future tax the children
A week before they're born.'

This is clearly a verse out of the older bal-

lad, while another quite as clearly belongs to our own times :—

' They will tax the ladies crinolines
Won't that be jolly fun,
And the day before Good Friday
They'll tax the hot-cross buns.
They are going to tax the Pork-pie hats,
With feathers white and red
Because they say their only flats
That put them on their head.'

Bnt in spite of the heavy burden of all this taxation, the author is in a good temper all the way through, and the whole business seems to him more or less a good joke, even when he attributes all taxes 'to the Whigs,' and 'Satan' their prime chief and instigator; in this latter point agreeing with sturdy old Sam Johnson's reply to Boswell, 'Sir, I have always said, the first Whig was the Devil.'

The 'Political Litany' differs from all our other ballads in being entirely in prose, and for the most part is rather a bitter satire on the noble Earl Russell (then Prime Minister, February, 1866), whom the poet irreverently addresses as 'O dearly bought and never to be forgotten Johnny,' while he is equally severe on Johnny's coadjutors in office, as a single sentence will prove :—

' When the *Whigs*[†] shall cease to be a milk and water set, and prove to the people of England that like good and trusty servants, they will stick up for their rights, and pass such measures as will be for the benefit of the nation at large ; then and not till then shall we consider them as trumps, and look upon them with confidence.'

But it is for Johnny himself that he specially reserves his sagest advice, his keenest wit, his sharpest warning. The burden and chorus of one of the ballads is—

' When we get Johnny's Reform,'

a future date, which in his eyes is clearly equivalent to the 'Greek Kalends.' Reform is a mere shadow, a scrap of moonshine, a popular cry, which

' Little Johnny bless the darling boy
Long time has nursed as his favourite toy,'

* 'Sir,' replies obsequious Bozzy, 'he was.'—Croker's 'Boswell,' p. 606.

[†] In a very recent edition of this ballad, the word *Whigs* is amusingly converted into Tories, so as to apply to the present Government.

but which will never be realized; a sor o dreamy, minor millennium, when 'boys and girls shall have almond rock and cakes for nuffin,'

' Tipplers will get tight three times a day,'
farmers will learn to double their miserable eight shillings a week for the labouring man, and in the midst of the universal rejoicing, 'little Johnny' himself

' His little body he will strut, sir,
Like a crow along a gutter
When we get the New Reform.'

But the house of Russell is not to be trusted, as we learn from our next ballad on 'Little Johnny, O!' which is prefaced by a few stinging questions and answers. 'Now, my child,' says the catechist, 'what is your name?' 'Weathercock Johnny, alias Jack the Reformer.' Having answered to his name, he is told that first he has to 'amend his ways which are in a most shaky condition ;' secondly, 'to take a few of Palmerston's Pills to invigorate his political system ;' and thirdly, 'to stick up for the people, and speak up according to his size as long as he remains in office ;' while Gladstone is implored to 'keep his weather eye open and jog the memory of his fellow-servant John, so as to *guide his little feet* if he should chance to stray from the right path.'

As for the question of Reform itself, it's a mere *cry* and nothing more. His interrogators insult the little statesman by hoping that 'Reform will so apply to railways that they shall supply a sufficient number of surgeons with splints and bandages to each train, with a good supply of coffins for those who are headstrong enough to travel by rail.' As to the processions, and grand 'Agricultural Hall meetings,' they are '*vox et præterea nihil*,'

' Many they aloud will shout,
For Reform, Reform,
Scarcely knowing what about
Bawl Reform, Reform.'

Such was the state of things only a few months ago ; but alas for the fickleness of the crowd, the intelligent artisan, and the 'working man,' by the time we get to the date of 'The Reform Battle in Hyde Park' all is changed. The noble Earl and all his Whiggish allies are for a time clean wiped out and forgotten, and the poet now reserves all his vials of wrath for

'The titled tories who keep you down
Which you cannot endure,
And the reason I to tell am bound
You're but working men — and poor.'

There are some ten other stanzas of a like calibre, but though Mr. Catnach has enriched them with a most graphic woodcut (date 1832) representing one Bishop, the Duke of Wellington, and Sir Robert Peel, headed by 'little Johnny' carrying a banner of 'Victoria and Reform,' all issuing in triumph from 'St. Stephen's School,' the whole thing is a mere piece of idle banter, which never rises above the level of a noisy chorus between people and bobbies, roughs and iron railings.

Even in the two latest of the Political Ballads, bearing date the middle of February, just as Parliament opened, and the *titled Tories* were tried, convicted, and condemned at the Agricultural Hall under the fiery sway of the impassioned O'Donoghue — before it was even known for what crimes they were indicted — even in these there is little more than abuse for that 'poor outcast' the member for Calne, and unfortunate Mr. Doulton.

The Royal Ballads are but three in number, — on the death of the Prince Consort, the marriage of the Prince of Wales, and the birth of his eldest son, — and of these we may take, as a sample, the 'Elegy on the Death of H.R.H. Prince Albert,' surmounted by a portrait of the 'Prince as he appeared on the morning of his Marriage,' and edged with a broad margin of black. The poet is lost in grief, and his mournful numbers flow heavily as he tells of 'Britannia lamenting and calling on the daughters of Britain to join in sorrowful condolence with their beloved Queen:

'We grieve for thy loss, Queen Victoria
And all over Britain deplore
Thy Consort, thy own dearest Consort
Is gone, and thy Albert's no more.'

He extols her Majesty as 'A mother, a Queen, and a wife,' and implores the choicest blessings of Heaven on her, and on the 'dear Royal children,' who

'Their dear royal hearts are bewildering
On earth they will see him no more;
He is gone, he is gone now before them,
He is gone to that sad silent bourne
Where numbers have travelled before him,
And from which there can no one return.'

This may be very homely sympathy, but it is respectful and hearty. The poet hardly

dares to intrude on the privacy of the Royal mourners, but with kindly hand touches on the many virtues of the departed Prince, claiming for him that from men of all ranks,

'From all men below and above'

he won universal love and respect, that for 'The Institutions he was always the right man,' while the poor found in him a 'free and helping hand.' And in these words the writer not only expresses the verdict of the nation but gives utterance to a far deeper feeling of loyal sympathy with his bereaved Queen, which triumphs over all the miseries of sorry rhyme and indifferent orthography. Thousands and tens of thousands of Her Majesty's poorest subjects were purchasers of this Halfpenny Ballad, and felt the national loss as deeply as those who could appreciate the poet Laureate's nobler song of sorrow —

'O silent Father of our Kings to be
Mourned in this golden hour of Jubilee.*

These Halfpenny Sheets form almost the entire poetry of Seven Dials, and though they teach little or no history, they show, at least, what kind of Poetry finds the most favourable reception and the readiest sale among our lowest classes. As far as we can ascertain, there are in London eight or ten publishers of the Fortey and Disney stamp — though not on so large a scale. Of Ballad-singers and patterers of prose recitations (such as the 'Political Catechism') there may be about a hundred scattered over the metropolis, who haunt such localities as the New Cut, Tottenham Court Road, Whitechapel, and Clerkenwell Green; and according to the weather, the state of trade, and the character of their wares, earn a scanty or a jovial living by chanting such strains as we have now laid before our readers. 'Songs if they're over-religious,' says one minstrel, 'don't sell at all; though a tidy moral does worry well. But a good, awful, murder's the thing. I've knowed,' says our authority, 'a man sell a ream \dagger a day of them, — that's twenty dozen you know; and this sale may go on for days, so that, with forty or fifty men at work as minstrels, a popular Ballad will soon attain a circulation of thirty or forty or fifty thousand. Now and then 'Catnach' himself composes

* Tennyson's 'Exhibition Ode,' July, 1862.

\dagger A ream costs him 3s. in Seven Dials, and these he retails at a halfpenny each, or even a penny, if the murder is a very fearful one, as in Muller's case, thus reaping a harvest of 250 or 300 per cent.

a Song, and in this case is saved the cost of copyright, though his expenses are very trifling, even when he has to purchase it. If one of the pattersers writes a Ballad on a taking subject, he hastens at once to Seven Dials, where, if accepted, his reward is ‘a glass of rum, a slice of cake, and five dozen copies,’ — which, if the accident or murder be a very awful one, are struck off for him while he waits. A murder always sells well, so does a fire, or a fearful railway accident. A good love story embracing

‘infidi peruria naute’

Deceptamque dolo nympham’ *

often does fairly; but Politics among the lowest class are a drug. Even the famous ‘Ballad on Pam’s death didn’t do much except among the better sort of people;’ and though the roughs are fond enough of shouting Reform, they don’t care, it would seem, to spend money on it.

We have submitted this wretched doggerel to our readers, that they may form some idea of the kind of Street Literature which is still popular with so many of the lower classes. It is humiliating, in the midst of all the schools and teaching of the present day, to find such rubbish continually poured forth, and eagerly read. Still there are some redeeming features in this weary waste. *Taken as a whole*, the moral tone of the ballads, if not lofty, is certainly not bad; and the number of single stanzas that could not be quoted in these pages on account of their gross or indecent language is very small; while that of entire Ballads, to be excluded on the same ground, is still smaller.

Compared with a volume of the famous ‘Roxburghe Ballads,’ which range between the years 1560 and 1700, our present five hundred from Seven Dials are models of purity and cleanliness. In the second volume of that famous collection there are about 580 Ballads, or broadsides, printed as ours still are on sheets of the thinnest and commonest paper; and at least three-fourths of these (especially of the later dates) are so grossly, openly indecent, as to be incapable of quotation. A few are slightly political, and refer to such topics as the ‘Meal-tub Plot;’ and a few to such themes as shipwrecks, and naval fights; but the majority are broadly and coarsely amorous; evidently written by persons above the lowest rank, for the express purpose of raising indecent and unclean thoughts in the minds of their readers; not by hinted indelicacy or vulgar coarseness of style, but by studied filthiness. No such nastiness is to be found

* V. Bourne. ‘Poemata.’

in the Halfpenny Ballads of Seven Dials; though there is abundance of slang, vulgarity, and occasional coarseness of expression. For open indecency and grosser pruriency we must go to a class of songs and song-books, authors and customers, of a higher class; to penny and twopenny and sixpenny packets of uncleanness, to some of the minor Music Halls, where delicacies are to be had at a price beyond the reach of the New Cut. The men who wrote the filthy Ballads in the ‘Roxburghe Collection’ were of a far higher class than those who write for Seven Dials; and they found higher readers amid the wide-spread deep depravity of their day. The thousands who now buy the Halfpenny Ballads of St. Giles’s, would rise to better taste, and the appreciation of higher models, if they had a higher class of authors, and a nobler range of verse. For, though the poet to reach them must needs be to some extent one of themselves, — must understand their ways of life, and forms of speech, — there is no need that he should be as ignorant, or vulgar, or vitiated as those for whom he writes. The Disley or Fortey of the day prints his ten or twenty thousand of ‘The Oakham Poachers,’ or ‘The Prince of Wales’ Baby, because these subjects are all the rage at the moment, and he can get no better minstrels so cheap. But there are yet in the minds and hearts of the poorest class, who can read and enjoy a Halfpenny Ballad on the ‘Awful Accident in Hyde Park,’ deeper feelings, and purer tastes ready to spring up under the least culture, and, if fairly appealed to, to be brought out into full life and bear abundant and godly fruit. They have no peculiar relish for bad spelling, or for faulty rhyme. Feeling and intelligence, a sense of such inborn goodness as Miss Nightingale’s; a love of fair play, and an old-fashioned liking for what is true and brave; a keen sense of the ludicrous, and a deep current of loyalty to the throne and to their native land, yet linger in the thousands who look to Seven Dials for inspiration. If any real poet should arise who would be content to sing in good, plain, honest Saxon, such topics as they love to hear; of men and women great in goodness or in vice, of life and death in their widest sense, of crime and disaster, of human sorrows and joys whether in Chick Lane or Windsor Castle; he would achieve an immortality not far below that of the ‘silver clarion’ of Tennyson himself. We do not despair of his advent, and the sooner he comes the better for Seven Dials; and for us all.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEXT morning Mr. Brownlow was not well enough to go to business. He was not ill. He repeated the assurance a score of times to himself and to his children. He had not slept well, that was all — and perhaps a day's rest, little quiet and tranquillity, would do him good. He had got up at his usual hour, and was down to breakfast, and read his paper, and everything went on in its ordinary way; but yet he was indisposed — and a day's rest would do him good. Young John assented heartily, and was very willing to take his father's place for the day and manage all his business. It was a bright morning, and the room was full of flowers, and the young leaves fluttered at the windows in the earliest green of spring. It was exhilarating to stand in the great recesses of the windows and look out upon the park, all green and budding, and think it was all yours and your children's — a sort of feeling which had little effect upon the young people, but was sweet yet overwhelming to their father as he stood and looked out in the quiet of the morning. All his — all theirs; yet perhaps —

"I don't think I shall go down to-day," he said. "You can tell Wrinkell to send me up the papers in the Wardell case. He knows what I want. He can send the — the new clerk up with them — Powys I mean."

"Powys?" said Jack.

"Well, yes, Powys, is there any reason why he should not send Powys?" said Mr. Brownlow, peremptorily, feeling hot and conscious, and ready to take offence.

"No, certainly," said Jack, with some surprise. He did not take to Powys, that was unquestionable; yet the chances are he would never have remarked upon Mr. Brownlow's choice of him but for the curious impatience and peremptoriness in his father's tone.

"I like him," said Mr. Brownlow — "he knows what he has to do, and — he does it. I like a man who does that — it gives one confidence for the time to come."

"Yes," said Jack. "I never cared for him, sir, as you know. He is not my ideal of a clerk — but that is nothing; only I rather think Wrinkell has changed his opinion lately. The young fellow gets on well enough — but there is a difference. I suppose that sort of extra punctuality and virtue can only last a certain time."

"I daresay these are very fine notions, Jack," said his father; "but I am not quite such an accomplished man of the world, I suppose, as if I had been brought up at Eton. I believe in virtue lasting a long time. You must bear with my old-fashioned prejudices." This Mr. Brownlow said in a way which puzzled Jack, for he was not a man given to sneers.

"Of course, if you take it like that, sir, I have not another word to say," said the young man, and he went away feeling bitterly hostile to Powys, who seemed to be the cause of it all. He said to himself that to be snubbed on account of a clerk was a new experience, and lost himself

in conjectures as to the cause of this unexplained partiality — "a fellow who is going to the bad and all," Jack said to himself; and his feeling was somewhat vindictive, and he did not feel so sorry as he ought to have done that Powys was going to the bad. It seemed on the whole a kind of retribution. Mr. Wrinkell himself had been sent for to Brownlows on various occasions, but it was not an honour that had been accorded to any of the clerks; and now this young fellow, whose appearance and conduct had both begun to be doubtful, was to have the privilege. Jack did not comprehend it; uneasy unexpressed suspicions came into his mind, all utterly wide of the mark, yet not the less uncomfortable. The mare was a comfort to him as she went off in one of her long dashes, without ever talking breath, like an arrow down the avenue; and so was the momentary glimpse of a little face at the window, to which he took off his hat; but notwithstanding these consolations, he was irritated and somewhat disturbed. On account of a cad! He had no right to give such a title to his father's favourite; but still it must be allowed that it was a little hard.

"Who is Powys?" said Sara when her brother was gone. "And why are you angry, papa? You are cross, you know, and that is not like you. I am afraid you must be ill."

"Cross, am I?" said Mr. Brownlow. "I suppose I am not quite well — I told you I had a bad night."

"Yes — but what has Powys to do with it? — and who is he?" said Sara, looking into his face.

These various possibilities rushed into her father's mind; should he tell her what he was going to ask of her? Should he claim her promise and hold her to her word? Should he make an attempt, the only one possible, to secure for himself a confidant and counsellor? Ah, no! that was out of the question. He might sully his own honour, but never, never his child's. And he felt, even with a certain exultation, that his child would not have yielded to the temptation — that she would balk him instead of obeying him, did she know why. He felt this in his inmost mind, and he was glad. She would do what he asked her, trusting in him, and in her it would be a virtue — only his should be the sin.

"Who is he?" he said, with a doubtful smile which resulted from his own thoughts, and not from her question. "You will know who he is before long. I want to be civil to him, Sara. He is not just like any other clerk. I would bring him, if you would not be shocked — to lunch!"

"Shocked!" said Sara, with one of her princess airs — "I am not a great lady. You are Mr. Brownlow the solicitor, papa — I hope I know my proper place."

"Yes," said John Brownlow; but the words brought an uneasy colour to his face, and confounded him in the midst of his projects. To keep her from being merely Mr. Brownlow the solicitor's daughter, he was going to soil his own

honour and risk her happiness ; and yet it was thus that she asserted her condition whenever she had a chance. He left her as soon as he could, taking no such advantage of his unusual holiday as Sara supposed he would. He left the breakfast room—which was so bright, and wandered away into the library, a room which, busy man as he was, he occupied very seldom. It was of all the rooms in Brownlows, the one which had most appearance of having been made by a new proprietor. There were books in it, to be sure, which had belonged to the Brownlows, the solicitors, for generations ; but these were not half or quarter part enough to fill the room, which was larger than any two rooms in the High Street—and consequently it had been necessary to fill the vacant space with ranges upon ranges of literature out of the bookseller's, which had not mellowed on the shelves, nor come to belong to them by nature. Mr. Brownlow did not think of this, but yet he was somehow conscious of it when, with the prospect of a long unoccupied day before him, he went into this room. It was on the other side of the house, turned away from the sunshine, and looking out upon nothing but evergreens, sombre corners of shrubberies, and the paths which led to the kitchen and stables. He went in and sat down by the table, and looked round at all the shelves, and drew a blotting-book towards him mechanically. What did he want with it ? he had no letters to write there—nothing to do that belonged to that luxurious leisurely place. If there was work to be done, it was at the office that he ought to do it. He had not the habit of writing here—not even of reading. The handsome library had nothing to do with his life. This, perhaps, was why he established himself in it on the special day of which we speak. It seemed to him as if any moment his fine house might topple down about his ears like a house of cards. He had thought over it in the High Street till he was sick and his head swam ; perhaps some new light might fall on the subject if he were to think of it here. This was why he established himself at the table, making in his leisure a pretence to himself of having something to do. If he had been used to any sort of guile or dishonourable dealing, the chances are it would have been easier for him ; but it is hard upon a man to change the habits of his life. John Brownlow had to maintain with himself a fight harder than that which a man ordinarily has to fight against temptation ; for the fact was that this was far, very far from being his case. He was not tempted to do wrong. It was the good impulse which in his mind had come to be the thing to be struggled against. What he wanted was to do what was right ; but with all the steadiness of a virtuous resolution he had set himself to struggle against his impulse and to do wrong.

Here was the state of the case : He had found, as he undoubtedly believed, the woman whom more than twenty years ago he had given himself so much trouble to find. She was here, a poor woman — to whom old Mrs. Thomson's

fifty thousand pounds would be equal to as many millions—with a son, whose every prospect would be changed, whose life would begin on a totally different level, if his legitimate inheritance came to him as it ought : this was all very distinct and clear. But, on the other hand, to withdraw that fifty thousand pounds from his own affairs at this moment, would be next to ruin to John Brownlow. It would be a loss to him of almost as much more. It would reduce him again hopelessly to the character of the country solicitor—a character which he had not abandoned, which he had, in short, rather prided himself in keeping up, but which was very different, in conjunction with his present standing in the county, from what it would be were he Brownlow the solicitor alone. And then there was the awful question of interest, which ought to have been accumulating all these five-and-twenty years. He thought to himself, as he reflected, that his best course would have been to reject young Powys's application and throw him off, and leave him to find occupation where he could. Then, if the young man had discovered anything, it would at least have been fair fight. But he had of his own will entered into relations with him ; he had him under his eyes day by day, a standing temptation, a standing reprobation ; he had kept him close by him to make discoveries that otherwise he probably never would have made ; and he had made discoveries. At any moment the demand might come which should change the character of the position altogether. All this was old ground, over which he had gone time after time. There was nothing new in it but the sudden remedy which had occurred to him on the previous night as he walked home. He had not as yet confessed to himself that he had accepted that suggestion, and yet only half voluntarily had taken the first step to bring it about. It was a remedy almost as bad as the original danger—very unpalatable, very mortifying—but it was better than utter downfall. By moments, Mr. Brownlow's heart revolted altogether against it. It was selling his child, even though it was for her own sake—it was taking advantage of her best instincts, of her rash girlish readiness to put her future in his hands. And there were also other questions involved. When it came to the point, would Sara hold by her promise—had she meant it, in earnest, as a real promise when she made it ? And then she was a girl who would do anything, everything for her father's sake, in the way of self-sacrifice, but would she understand sacrificing herself to save, not her father, but Brownlows ? All these were very doubtful questions. Mr. Brownlow, who had never before been in anybody's power, who knew nothing about mysteries, found himself now, as it were, in everybody's power, threading a darkling way, from which his own efforts could never deliver him. He was in the power of young Powys, who any day could come to his door and demand—how much ? any sum almost—his whole fortune—with no alternative but that of a lawsuit, which,

would take his good name as well. He was in the power of his son, who, if he heard of it, might simplify matters very summarily, and the chances were would do so ; and he was in the power of Sara, who could save him if she would — save him not only from the consequences but from the sin — save his conscience and his credit, and her own position. Why should not she do it ? Young Powys was poor, and perhaps not highly educated ; but he was pleasanter to look at, more worth talking to, than Sir Charles Motherwell. If he gave his daughter to this youth, John Brownlow felt that he would do more than merely make him amends for having taken his inheritance. It would be restoring the inheritance to him, and giving him over and above it something that was worth more than compound interest. When he had come to this point, however, a revulsion occurred in his thoughts. How could he think of marrying his child, his Sara, she of whom he had made a kind of princess, who might marry anybody, as people say — how could he give her to a nameless young man in his office ? What would the world say ? What inquiries, what suspicions would arise, if he gave up his house and all its advantages to a young fellow without a penny ? And then Sara herself, so delicate in all her tastes, so daintily brought up, so difficult to please ! If she were so little fastidious at the end what would be thought of it ? She had refused Sir Charles Motherwell, if not actually yet tacitly — and Sir Charles had many advantages, and was very nearly the greatest man in the county — refused him, and now was going to take her father's uncultivated clerk. Would she, could she do it ? Was it a thing he ought to ask of her ? or was it not better that he should take it upon his conscience boldly to deceive and wrong the stranger than to put such a burden on the delicate shoulders of his child !

Thus he passed the morning driven about from one idea to another and feeling little comfort in any, longing for Powys's arrival, that he might read in his eyes how much he knew, and yet fearing it, lest he might know too much. If any one of his clients had come to him in such a state of mind, John Brownlow would have looked upon that man with a certain pity mingled with contempt, and while advising him to his best would have said to himself, How weak all this shilly-shally is ! one way or other let something be decided. But it is a very different matter deciding on one's own affairs and on the affairs of other people. Even at that moment, notwithstanding his own agitation and mental distress, had he been suddenly called upon for counsel he could have given it clearly and fully — the thing was that he could not advise himself.

And to aggravate matters, while he sat thus thinking it all over and waiting for Powys, and working himself up almost to the point of preparing for a personal contest with him, the Rector chanced to call, and was brought triumphantly into the library. "Papa is so seldom at home," Sara had said, with a certain exulta-

tion ; "come and see him." and Mr. Hardcastle was exultant too. "How lucky that I should have come to-day of all others," he said. "One never sees you by daylight."

"Well, yes," said Mr. Brownlow, who was cross and out of temper in spite of himself; "I am visible by daylight to everybody on the road between this and Masterton. I don't think I shut myself up.

"That's exactly what I mean," said the Rector ; "but you have been overdoing it, Brownlow. You're ill. I always told you you ought to give yourself more leisure. A man at your time of life is not like a young fellow. We can't do it, my dear sir — we can't do it. I am up to as much as most men of my age ; but it won't do morning and night — I have found that out."

"It suits me very well," said Mr. Brownlow, "I am not ill, thank you. I had a restless night — rather —"

"Ah, that's just it," said Mr. Hardcastle. "The brain is fatigued — that is what it is. And you ought to take warning. It is the beginning of so many things. For instance, last year when my head was so bad —"

"Don't speak of it," said Mr. Brownlow. "My head is not bad ; I am all right. I have a — a clerk coming with some papers : that is what I am waiting for. Is Fanny with you today ?"

"No," said Mr. Hardcastle. "They have begun to have her up at Ridley more than I care to see her. And there is that young Keppel, you know. Not that he means anything, I suppose. Indeed, I thought he was devoted to Sara a short time ago. Ah, my dear Brownlow, it is a difficult matter for us, left as we both are with young girls who have never known maternal care —"

It was not a moment when Mr. Brownlow could enter upon such a subject. But he instinctively changed his expression, and looked solemn and serious, as the occasion demanded. Poor Bessie ! — he had probably been a truer lover to her than the Rector had been to the two Mrs. Hardcastles, though she had not been in his mind just then ; but he felt bound to put on the necessary melancholy look.

"Yes," he said ; "no doubt it is difficult. My clerk is very late. He ought to have been here at twelve. I have a good many pressing matters of business just now —"

"I see, I see ; you have no time for private considerations," said the Rector. "Don't overdo it, don't overdo it, — that is all I have got to say. Remember what a condition I was in only two years since — took no pleasure in anything. Man delighted me not, nor women either — not even my little Fanny. If ever there was a miserable state on earth, it is that. I see a fine tall young fellow straying about there among the shrubberies. Is that your clerk ?"

Mr. Brownlow got up hastily and came to the window, and there beyond all question was Powys, who had lost his way, and had got in-

volved in the maze of paths which divided the evergreens. It was a curious way for him to approach the house, and he was not the man to seek a back entrance, however humble his circumstances had been. But anyhow it was he, and he had got confused, and stood under one of the great laurels, looking at the way to the stables, and the way to the kitchen, feeling that neither way was his way, and not knowing where to turn. Mr. Brownlow opened the window and called to him. Many a day after he thought of it, with that vague wonder which such symbolical circumstances naturally excite. It did not seem important enough to be part of the symbolism of Providence at the moment. Yet it was strange to remember that it was thus the young man was brought into the house. Mr. Brownlow set the window open, and watched him as he came forward, undeniably a fine tall young fellow, as Mr. Hardcastle said. Somehow a kind of pride in his good looks, such as a father might have felt, came into John Brownlow's mind. Sir Charles with his black respirator, was not to be named in the same day with young Powys, so far as appearance went. He was looking as he did when he first came to the office, fresh, and frank, and openhearted. Those appearances which had so troubled the mind of Mr. Wrinkell and alarmed Mr. Brownlow himself, were not visible in his open countenance. He came forward with his firm and rapid step, not the step of a dweller in streets. And Mr. Hardcastle, who had a slight infusion of muscular Christianity in his creed, could not refrain from admiration.

"That is not much like what one looks for in a lawyer's clerk," said the Rector. "What a chest that young fellow has got! "Who is he, Brownlow? — not a Masterton man, I should think."

"He is a Canadian," said Mr. Brownlow, "not very long in the office, but very promising. He has brought me some papers that I must attend to" —

"Yes, yes, I understand," said Mr. Hardcastle — "always business; but I shall stay to luncheon as you are at home. I suppose you mean to allow yourself some lunch?"

"Surely," said Mr. Brownlow; but it was impossible to reply otherwise than coldly. He had wanted no spy upon his actions, nobody to speculate on what he meant in the strange step he was about to take. He could not send his neighbour away; but at the same time he could not be cordial to him, as if he desired his company. And then he turned to speak to his clerk, leaving the Rector, who went away in a puzzled state of mind, wondering whether Mr. Brownlow meant to be rude to him. As for young Powys, he came in by the window, taking off his hat, and looking at his employer with an honest mixture of amusement and embarrassment. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said; "I had lost my way; I don't know where I was going" —

"You were going to the stables," said Mr. Brownlow, "where I daresay you would have

found something much more amusing than with me. Come in. You are later than I expected. How is it you did not come up in the dogcart? My son should have thought of that."

"He did not say anything about it," said Powys, "but I liked the walk. Mr. Wrinkell told me to bring you these, sir. They are the papers in the Wardell case; and he gave me some explanations which I was to repeat to you — some new facts that have just come out" —

"Sit down," said Mr. Brownlow. He gave the young man a seat at his table, and resumed his own, and drew the papers to him. But he was not thinking of the papers or of the Wardell case. His attention was fixed upon his young companion. Perhaps it was the walk, perhaps some new discovery, perhaps because he began to see his way to the recovery of that which John Brownlow was determined not to give up, but certainly his eye was as bright and his colour as fresh as when he had first come to the office innocent and unsuspecting. He sat down with none of the affectation either of humility or of equality which a Masterton youth of his position would have shown. He was not afraid of his employer, who had been kind to him, and his transatlantic ideas made him feel the difference between them, though great in the mean time, to be rather a difference of time than of class. Such at least was the unconscious feeling in his mind. It is true that he had begun to learn that more things than time, or even industry and brains, are necessary in an old and long-constituted social system, but his new and hardly purchased knowledge had not affected his instincts. He was respectful, but he did not feel himself out of place in Mr. Brownlow's library. He took his seat, and looked round him with the interest of a man free to observe or even comment, which, considering that even Mr. Wrinkell was rather disposed at Brownlows to sit on the edge of his chair, was a pleasant variety. Mr. Brownlow drew the papers to him, and bent over them, leaning his head on both his hands; but the fact was, he was looking at Powys from under that cover, fixing his anxious gaze upon him, reading what was in the unsuspicious face — what was in it, and most likely a great deal which was not in it. When he had done this for some minutes he suddenly raised his head, removed his hands from his forehead to his chin, and looked steadily at his young companion.

"I will attend to these by-and-by," he said, abruptly; "in the mean time, my young friend, I have something to say to you."

Then Powys, whose eyes had been fixed upon a dark picture over and beyond, at some distance, Mr. Brownlow's head, came to himself suddenly, and met the look fixed upon him. The elder man thought there was a little defiance in the glance which the younger cast upon him; but this is one of the things in which one sees always what one is prepared to see. Powys, for his part, was not in the least defiant; he was a little surprised, a little curious, eager

to hear and reply, but he was utterly unconscious of the sentiments which the other read in his eyes.

"I thought a little while ago," said Mr. Brownlow, "in his excitement going further than he meant to go, "that I had found in you one of the best clerks that ever I had."

Here he stopped for a moment, and Powys regarded him open-mouthed, waiting for more. His frank face clouded over a little when he saw that Mr. Brownlow made a pause. "I was going to say Thank you, sir," said the young man; "and indeed I do say Thank you; but am I to understand that you don't think so now?"

"I don't know what to think," said Mr. Brownlow. "I take more interest in you than — than I am in the habit of taking in a — in a stranger: but they tell me at the office there is a change, and I see there is a change. It has been suggested to me that you were going to the bad, which I don't believe; and it has been suggested to me that you had something on your mind?"

The young man had changed colour, as indeed he could scarcely help doing; his *anour propre* was still as lively and as easily excited as is natural to his age. "If you are speaking of my duties in the office, sir," he said, "you have a perfect right to speak; but I don't suppose they could be influenced one way or another by the fact that I had something on my mind?"

"I am not speaking to you so much as your employer as — as your friend," said Mr. Brownlow. "You know the change has been visible. People have spoken about it to me — not perhaps the people you would imagine to have interfered. And I want to speak to you as an old man may speak to a young man — as I should wish, if the circumstances make it needful, any one would speak to my son. Why do you smile?"

"I beg your pardon, sir; but I could not but smile at the thought of Mr. John!"

"Never mind Mr. John," said Mr. Brownlow, discomfited. "He has his way, and we have ours. I don't set up my son as an example. The thing is, that I should be glad if you would take me into your confidence. If anything is wrong I might be able to help you; and if you have something on your mind?"

"Mr. Brownlow," said young Powys, with a deep blush, "I am very sorry to seem ungrateful, but a man, if he is good for anything, must have something he keeps to himself. If it is about my work, I will hear whatever you please to say to me, and make whatever explanations you require. I am not going to the bad; but for anything else I think I have a right to my own mind."

"I don't deny it — I don't deny it," said Mr. Brownlow, anxiously. "Don't think I want to thrust myself into your affairs; but if either advice or help?"

"Thank you," said the young man. He smiled, and once more Mr. Brownlow, though

not imaginative, put a thousand meanings into the smile. "I will be more attentive to my work," he said; "perhaps I have suffered my own thoughts to interfere with me. Thank you, sir, for your kindness. I am very glad that you have given me this warning."

"But it does not tempt you to open your heart," said Mr. Brownlow, smiling too, though not with very pleasurable feelings.

"There is nothing in my heart that is worth opening," said Powys; "nothing but my own small affairs — thank you heartily all the same."

This is how Mr. Brownlow was baffled notwithstanding his superior age and prudence and skill. He sat silent for a time with that curious feeling of humiliation and displeasure which attends a defeat even when nobody is to be blamed for it. Then by way of saving his dignity he drew once more towards him the Wardell papers and studied them in silence. As for the young man, he resumed, but with a troubled mind, his examination of the dark old picture. Perhaps his refusal to open his heart arose as much from the fact that he had next to nothing to tell as from any other reason, and the moment that the conversation ceased his heart misgave him. Young Powys was not one of the people possessed by a blessed certainty that the course they themselves take is the best. As soon as he had closed his mouth a revulsion of feeling came upon him. He seemed to himself hard-hearted, ungrateful, odious, and sat thinking over all Mr. Brownlow's kindness to him, and his detestable requital of that kindness, and asking himself how he could recommend the interrupted talk. What could he say to show that he was very grateful, and a devoted servant, notwithstanding that there was a corner of his heart which he could not open up? or must he continue to lie under this sense of having disappointed and refused to confide in so kind a friend?

A spectator would have supposed the circumstances unchanged had he seen the lawyer seated calmly by the table looking over his papers, and his clerk at a little distance respectfully waiting his employer's pleasure; but in the breast of the young man, who was much too young to be sure of himself, there was a wonderful change. He seemed to himself to have made a friend instead of an enemy; to have lost his vantage-ground in Mr. Brownlow's good opinion, and above all to have been ungrateful and unkind. Thus they sat in dead silence till the bell for luncheon — the great bell which amused Pamela, bringing a lively picture before her of all that was going on at the great house — began to sound into the stillness. Then Mr. Brownlow stirred, gathered his papers together, and rose from his chair. Powys sat still, not knowing what to do; and it may be imagined what his feelings were when his employer spoke.

"Come along, Powys," said Mr. Brownlow — "you have had a long walk, and you must be hungry — come and have some lunch."

CHAPTER XV.—LUNCHEON.

It was like a dream to the young Canadian when he followed the master of the house into the dining-room; — not that *that*, or any other social privilege, would have struck the youth with astonishment or exultation as it would have done a young man from Masterton; but because he had just behaved so ungratefully and ungraciously, and had no right to any such recompense. He had heard enough in the office about Brownlow to know that it was an unprecedented honour that was being paid him; but it was the coals of fire thus heaped upon his head which he principally felt. Sara was already at the head of the table in all that perfection of dainty apparel which dazzles the eyes of people unused to it. Naturally the stranger knew nothing about any one particular of her dress, but he felt, without knowing how, the difference between that costly simplicity and all the finery of the women he was accustomed to see. It was a different sphere and atmosphere altogether from any he had ever entered; and the only advantage he had over any of his fellow-clerks who might have been introduced in the same way was, that he had mastered the first grand rule of good breeding, and had forgotten himself. He had no time to think how he ought to behave in his own person. His mind was too much occupied by the novelty of the sphere into which he was thus suddenly brought. Sara inclined her head graciously as he was brought in, and was not surprised; but as for Mr. Hardcastle, whose seat was just opposite that of young Powys, words could not express his consternation. One of the clerks! Mr. Brownlow the solicitor was not such a great man himself that he should feel justified in introducing his clerks at his table; and after that, what next? A rapid calculation passed through Mr. Hardcastle's mind as he stared at the new-comer. If this sort of thing was to go on, it would have to be looked to. If Mr. Brownlow thought it right for Sara, he certainly should not think it right for his Fanny. Jack Brownlow himself, with Brownlow's perhaps, and at least a large share of his father's fortune, was not to be despised; but the clerks! The Rector even felt himself injured — though, to be sure, young Powys or any other clerk could not have dreamed of paying addresses to him. And it must be admitted that the conversation was not lively at table. Mr. Brownlow was embarrassed as knowing his own intentions, which, of course, nobody else did. Mr. Hardcastle was astonished and partially affronted. And Powys kept silence. Thus there was only Sara to keep up a little appearance of animation at the table. It is at such moments that the true superiority of woman-kind really shows itself. She was not embarrassed — the social difference which, as she thought, existed between her and her father's clerk was so great and complete that Sara felt herself as fully at liberty to be gracious to him, as if he had been his own mother or sister.

"If Mr. Powys walked all the way he must want his luncheon, papa," she said. "Don't you think it is a pretty road? Of course it is not grand like your scenery in Canada. We don't have any Niagaras in England; but it is pleasant, don't you think?"

"It is very pleasant," said young Powys; "but there are more things in Canada than Niagara."

"I suppose so," said Sara, who was rather of opinion that he ought to have been much flattered by her allusion to Canada; and there are prettier places in England than Dewsbury — but still people who belong to it are fond of it all the same. Mr. Hardcastle, this is the dish you are so fond of — are you ill, like papa, that you don't eat to-day?"

"Not ill, my dear," said the Rector, with meaning — "only like your papa a little out of sorts."

"I don't know why people should be out of sorts who have everything they can possibly want," said Sara. "I think it is wicked both of papa and you. If you were poor men in the village, with not enough for your children to eat, you would know better than to be out of sorts. I am sure it would do us all a great deal of good if we were suddenly ruined," the young woman continued, looking her father, as it happened, full in the face. Of course she did not mean anything. It came into her head all at once to say this, and she said it; but equally of course it fell with a very different significance on her father's ears. He changed colour in spite of himself — he dropped on his plate a morsel he was carrying to his mouth. A sick sensation came over him. Sara did not know very much about the foundation of his fortune, but still she knew something; and she was just as likely as not to let fall some word which would throw final illumination upon the mind of the young stranger. Mr. Brownlow smiled a sickly sort of smile at her from the other end of the table.

"Don't use such strong language," he said. "Being ruined means with Sara going to live in a cottage covered with roses, and taking care of one's aged father; but, my darling, your father is not yet old enough to give in to being ruined, even should such a chance happen to us. So you must make up your mind to do without the cottage. The roses you can have, as many as you like."

"Sara means by ruin, that is to say," said the Rector, "something rather better than the best that I have been able to struggle into, and nothing to do for it. I should accept her ruin with all my heart."

"You are laughing at me," said Sara, "both of you. Fanny would know if she were here. You understand, don't you, Mr. Powys? What do I care for cottages or roses? but if one were suddenly brought face to face with the realities of life!"

"You have got that out of a book, Sara," said the Rector.

"And if I have, Mr. Hardcastle?" said Sara,

"I hope some books are true. I know what I mean, whether you know it or not. And so does Mr. Powys," she added, suddenly meeting the stranger's eye.

This appeal was unlucky, for it neutralised the amusement of the two elder gentlemen, and brought them back to their starting-point. It was a mistake in every way, for Powys, though he was looking on with interest and wonder, did not understand what Sara meant. He looked at her when she spoke, and reddened, and faltered something, and then betook himself to his plate with great assiduity, to hide his perplexity. He had never known anything but the realities of life. He had known them in their most primitive shape, and he was beginning to become acquainted with them still more bitterly in the shape they take in the midst of civilisation, when poverty has to contend with more than the primitive necessities. And to think of this dainty creature, whose very air that she breathed seemed different from that of his world, desiring to be brought face to face with such realities! He had been looking at her with great reverence, but now there mingled with his reverence just that shade of conscious superiority which a man likes to feel. He was not good, sweet, delightsome, celestial, as she was, but he knew better—precious distinction between the woman and the man.

But Sara, always thinking of him as so different from herself that she could use freedom with him, was not satisfied. "You understand me?" she said, repeating her appeal.

"No," said young Powys; "at least if it is real poverty she speaks of, I don't think Miss Brownlow can know what it means." He turned to her father as he spoke with the instinct of natural good-breeding. And there occurred a curious change. The two gentlemen began to approve of the stranger. Sara, who up to this moment had been so gracious, approved of him no more.

"You are quite right," said the Rector; "what Miss Brownlow is thinking of is an imaginary poverty which exists no longer—if it ever existed. If your father had ever been a poor curate, my dear Sara, like myself, for instance!"

"Oh, if you are all going to turn against me—" said Sara, with little shrug of her shoulders. And she turned away as much as she could do it without rudeness from the side of the table at which young Powys sat, and began in revenge to talk society. "So Fanny is at Ridley," she said: "what does she mean by always being at Ridley? The Keppels are very well, but they are not so charming as that comes to. Is there any one nice staying there just now?"

"Perhaps you and I should not agree about niceness," said the Rector. "There are several people down for Easter. There is Sir Joseph Scrape, for instance, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer once, before you were born. I am very fond of him, but you would prefer his

grandson, Sara, if he happened to have a grandson."

"On the contrary, I like old gentlemen," said Sara. "I never see anything else, for one thing. There is yourself, Mr. Hardcastle, and papa!"

"Well, I suppose I am an old gentleman," said the Rector, ruefully; "at least to babies like you. That is how things go in this world—one shifts the burden on to one's neighbour. Probably Sir Joseph is of my mind, and thinks somebody else old. And then, in revenge, we have nothing to do but to call you young creatures babies, though you have the world in your hands," Mr. Hardcastle added, with a sigh; for he was a vigorous man, and a widower, and had been already twice married, and saw no reason why he should not take that step again. And it was hard upon him to be called an old gentleman in this unabashed and open way.

"Well, I have the world before them," said Mr. Brownlow; "but I am not so sure that they have it in their hands."

"We have nothing in our hands," said Sara, indignantly—"even I, though papa is awfully good to me. I don't mean to speak slang, but he is *awfully* good, you know; and what does it matter? I dare not go anywhere by myself, or do anything that everybody else doesn't do. And as for Fanny, she would not so much as take a walk if she thought you did not like it."

"Fanny is a very good girl," said Mr. Hardcastle, with a certain melting in his voice.

"We are all very good girls!" said Sara; but what is the use of it? We have to do everything we are told just the same; and have old Lady Motherwell, for example, sitting upon one, whenever she has a chance. And then you say we have the world in our hands! If you were to let us do a little as we pleased, and be happy our own way!"

"Then you have changed your mind," said Mr. Brownlow. He was smiling, but yet underneath that he was very serious, not able to refrain from giving in his mind a thousand times more weight than they deserved to his daughter's light and random words, though he knew well enough they were random and light. "I thought you were a dutiful child, who would do what I asked you, even in the most important transaction of your life—so you said once, at least."

"Anything you asked me, papa?" cried Sara, with a sudden change of countenance. "Yes, to be sure! anything! Not because I am dutiful, but because—you are surely all very stupid to-day—because—Don't you know what I mean?"

"Yes," said young Powys, who all this time had not spoken a word. Perhaps in her impatience her eye had fallen upon him; perhaps it was because he could not help it; but however that might be, the monosyllable sent a little electric shock round the table. As for the speaker himself, he had no sooner uttered it than he reddened like a girl up to his very hair.

Sara started a little, and became suddenly silent, looking at the unexpected interpreter she had got; and as for the Rector, he stared with the air of a man who asks himself, What next?

The sudden pause thus made in the conversation by his inadvertent reply, confused the young man most of all. He felt it down to the very tips of his fingers. It went tingling through and through him, as if he were the centre of the electricity—as indeed he was. His first impulse, to get up and run away, of course could not be yielded to; and as luncheon was over by this time, and the servants gone, and the business of the meal over, it was harder than ever to find any shelter to retire behind. Despair at last, however, gave him a little courage. "I think, sir," he said, turning to Mr. Brownlow, "if you have no commands for me that I had better go. Mr. Wrinkell will want to know your opinion; unless, indeed" —

"I am not well enough for work," said Mr. Brownlow, "and you may as well take a holiday as you are here. It will do you good. Go and look at the horses, and take a stroll in the park. Of course you are fond of the country. I don't think there is much to see in the house" —

"If Mr. Powys would like to see the Claude, I will take him into the drawing-room," said Sara with all her original benignity. Powys, to tell the truth, did not very well know whether he was standing on his head, or on the other and more ordinary extremity. He was confounded by the grace showed to him. And being a backwoodsman by nature, and knowing not much more than Masterton in the civilised world, the fact is that at first, before he considered the matter, he had not an idea what a Claude was. But that made no difference; he was ready to have gone to Pandemonium if the same offer had been made to show the way. Not that he had fallen in love at first sight with the young mistress of Brownsaws. He was too much dazzled, too much surprised for that; but he had understood what she meant, and the finest little delicate thread of *rappart* had come into existence between them. As for Sara's condescension and benignity, he liked it. Her brother would have driven him frantic with a tithe of the affability which Sara thought her duty under the circumstances; but from her it was what it ought to be. The young man did not think it was possible that such a privilege was to be accorded to him, but he looked at her gratefully, thanking her with his eyes. And Sara looked at him, and for an instant saw into those eyes, and became suddenly sensible that it was not her father's clerk, but a man, a young man, to whom she had made this obliging offer. It was not an idea that had entered her head before; he was a clerk whom Mr. Brownlow chose to bring in to luncheon. He might have been a hundred for anything Sara cared. Now, all at once it dawned upon her that the clerk was a man, and young, and also well-looking, a discovery which filled her

with a certain mixture of horror and amusement. "Well, how was I to know?" she said to herself, although, to be sure, she had been sitting at the same table with him for about an hour.

"Certainly, if Powys likes, let him see the Claude; but I should think he would prefer the horses," said Mr. Brownlow; and then Sara rose and shook out her long skirt, and made a little sign to the stranger, to follow her. When the two young creatures disappeared, Mr. Hardeastle, who had been staring at them, open-mouthed, turned round aghast and pale with consternation upon his friend.

"Brownlow, are you mad?" he said; "good heavens! if it was anybody but you I should think it was softening of the brain."

"It may be softening of the brain," said Mr. Brownlow, cheerfully; "I don't know what the symptoms are. What's wrong?"

"What's wrong?" said the Rector—he had to stop to pour himself out a glass of wine to collect his faculties—"why it looks as if you meant it. Send your clerk off with your child, a young fellow like that, as if they were equals! Your clerk! I should not permit it with my Fanny, I can tell you that."

"Do you think Sara will run away with him?" said Mr. Brownlow, smiling. "I feel sure I can trust him not to do it. Why, what nonsense you are speaking! If you have no more confidence in my little friend Fanny, I have. She would be in no danger from my clerk if she were to see him every day, and show him all the pictures in the world."

"Oh, Fanny,—that is not the question," said the Rector, half suspicious of the praise, and half pleased. "It was Sara we were talking of. I don't believe she would care if a man was a chimney-sweep. You have inoculated her with your dreadful Radical ideas" —

"I? I am not a Radical," said Mr. Brownlow; and he still smiled, though he entered into no further explanation. As for the Rector, he gulped down his wine subsided into his neck-cloth, as he did when he was disturbed in his mind. He had no parallel in his experience to this amazing indiscretion. Fanny?—no; to be sure Fanny was a very good girl and knew her place better—she would not have offered to show the Claude; though it had been the finest Claude in the world, even to a curate, much less to a clerk. And then it seemed to Mr. Hardeastle that Mr. Brownlow's eyes looked very heavy, and that there were many tokens half visible about him of softening of the brain.

Meanwhile Sara went sweeping along the great wide fresh airy passages, and through the hall, and up the grand staircase. Her dress was of silk, and rustled—not a vulgar rustle, like that which announces some women offensively wherever they go, but a soft satiny silvery ripple of sound which harmonised her going like a low accompaniment. Young Powys had only seen her for the first time that day, and he was a reasonable young fellow, and had not a thought of love or love-making in his mind.

Love! as if anything so preposterous could ever arise between this young princess and a poor lawyer's clerk, maintaining his mother and his little sisters on sixty pounds a-year. But yet, he was a young man, and she was a girl; and following after her as he did, it was not in human nature not to behold and note the fair creature with her glistening robes and her shining hair. Now and then, when she passed through a patch of sunshine from one of the windows, she seemed to light up all over, and reflect it back again, and send forth soft rays of responsive light. Though she was so slender and slight, her step was as steady and free as his own, Canadian and backwoodsman as he was; and yet, as she moved, her pretty head swayed by times like the head of a tall lily upon the breeze, not with weakness, but with the flexible grace that belonged to her nature. Powys saw all this, and it bewitched him, though she was altogether out of his sphere. Something in the atmosphere about her went to his head. It was the most delicate intoxication that ever man felt, and yet it was intoxication in a way. He went up stairs after her, feeling like a man in a dream, not knowing what fairy palace, what new event she might be leading him to; but quite willing and ready, under her guidance, to meet any destiny that might await him. The Claude was so placed in the great drawing-room that the actual landscape, so far as the mild greenness of the park could be called landscape, met your eye as you turned from the immortal landscape of the picture. Sara went straight up to it without a pause, and showed her companion where he was to stand. "This is the Claude," she said, with a majestic little wave of her hand by way of introduction. And the young man stood and looked at the picture, with her dress almost touching him. If he did not know much about the Claude at the commencement, he knew still less now. But he looked into the clear depths of the picture with the most devout attention. There was a ripple of water, and a straight line of light gleaming down into it, penetrating the stream, and casting up all the crisp cool glistening wavelets against its own glow. But as for the young spectator, who was not a connoisseur, his head got confused somehow between the sun on Claude's ripples of water, and the sun as it had fallen in the hall upon Sara's hair and her dress.

"It is very lovely," he said, rather more because he thought it was the thing he ought to say than from any other cause.

"Yes," said Sara; "we are very proud of our Claude; but I should like to know why active men like papa should like those sort of pictures; he prefers landscapes to everything else — whereas they make me impatient. I want something that lives and breathes. I like pictures of life — not that one everlasting line of light fixed down upon the canvas with no possibility of change."

"I don't know much about pictures," said

Powys — "but yet — don't you think it is less natural still to see one everlasting attitude — like that, for instance, on the other wall? people don't keep doing one particular thing all their lives."

"I should like to be a policeman and tell them to move on," said Sara. "That woman there, who is giving the bread to the beggar — she has been the vexation of my life; why can't she give it and have done with it? I think I hate pictures — I don't see what we want with them. I always want to know what happened next."

"But nothing need happen at all here," said Powys with unconscious comprehension, turning to the Claude again. He was a little out of his depth, and not used to this kind of talk, but more and more it was going to his head, and that intoxication carried him on.

"That is the worst of all," said Sara. "Why doesn't there come a storm? — what is the good of everything always being the same? That was what I meant down-stairs when you pretended you did not understand."

What was the poor young fellow to say? He was penetrated to his very heart by the sweet poison of this unprecedented flattery — for it was flattery, though Sara meant nothing more than the freemasonry of youth. She had forgotten he was a clerk, standing there before the Claude; she had even forgotten her own horror at the discovery that he was a man. He was young like herself, willing to follow her lead, and he "understood;" which after all, though Sara was not particularly wise, is the true test of social capabilities. He did know what she meant, though in that one case he had not responded; and Sara, like everybody else of quick intelligence and rapid mind, met with a great many people who stared and did not know what she meant. This was why she did the stranger the honour of a half reproach; — it brought the poor youth's intoxication to its height.

"But I don't think you understand," he said, ruefully, apologetically, pathetically, laying himself down at her feet, as it were, to be trod upon if she pleased — "you don't know how hard it is to be poor; so long as it was only one's self, perhaps, or so long as it was mere hardship; but there is worse than that; you have to feel yourself mean and sordid — you have to do shabby things. You have to put yourself under galling obligations; but I ought not to speak to you like this — that is what it really is to be poor."

Sara stood and looked at him, opening her eyes wider and wider. This was not in the least like the cottage with the roses, but she had forgotten all about that; what she was thinking of now was whether he was referring to his own case — whether his life was like that — whether her father could not do something for him; but for the natural grace of sympathy which restrained her, she would have said so right out; but in her simplicity she said some-

thing very near as bad. "Mr. Powys," she said, quite earnestly, "do you live in Masterton all alone?"

Then he woke up and came to himself. It was like falling from a great height, and finding one's feet, in a very confused, sheepish sort of way, on the common ground. And the thought crossed his mind, also, that she might think he was referring to himself, and made him still more sheepish and confused. But yet, now that he was roused, he was able to answer for himself. "No, Miss Brownlow," he said; "my mother and my little sisters are with me. I don't live alone."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Sara whose turn it now was to blush. "I hope you like Masterton?" This very faltering and uncomfortable question was the end of the interview; for it was very clear no answer was required. And then she showed him the way down-stairs, and he went his way by himself, retracing the very steps which he had taken when he was following her. He felt, poor fellow, as if he had made a mistake somehow, and done something wrong, and went out very rueful into the park, as he would have gone to his desk, in strict obedience to his employer's commands.

CHAPTER XVI.

LATE in the afternoon Mr. Brownlow did really look as if he were taking a holiday. He came forth into the avenue as Sara was going out and joined her, and she seized her opportunity, and took his arm and led him up and down in the afternoon sunshine. It is a pretty sight to see a girl clinging to her father, pouring all her guesses and philosophies into his ears, and claiming his confidence. It is a different kind of intercourse, more picturesque, more amusing, in some ways even more touching, than the intercourse of a mother and daughter, especially when there is, as with these two, no mother in the case, and the one sole parent has both offices to fulfil. Sara clung to her father's arm, and congratulated herself upon having got him out, and promised herself a good long talk. "For I never see you, papa," she said; "you know I never see you. You are at that horrid office the whole long day."

"Only all the mornings and all the evenings," said Mr. Brownlow, "which is a pretty good proportion, I think, of life."

"Oh, but there is always Jack or somebody," said Sara tightening her clasp of his arm; "and sometimes one wants only you."

"Have you something to say to me, then?" said her father, with a little curiosity, even anxiety,—for of course his own disturbed thoughts accompanied him everywhere, and put meanings into every word that was said.

"Something!" said Sara, with indignation; "heaps of things. I want to tell you and I want to ask you;—but, by the by, answer me first, before I forget, is this Mr. Powys very poor?"

"Powys!" said Mr. Brownlow, with a suppressed thrill of excitement. "What of Powys? It seems to me I hear of nothing else. Where has the young fellow gone?"

"I did not do anything to him," said Sara, turning her large eyes full of mock reproach upon her father's face. "You need not ask him from me in that way. I suppose he has gone home—to his mother and his little sisters," she added dropping her voice.

"And what do you know about his mother and his little sisters?" said Mr. Brownlow, startled yet amused by her tone.

"Well, he told me he had such people belonging to him, papa," said Sara; "and he gave me a very grand description before that of what it is to be poor. I want to know if he is very poor? and could I send anything to them, or do anything? or are they too grand for that? or couldn't you raise his salary, or something? You ought to do something, since he is a favourite of your own."

"Did he complain to you?" said Mr. Brownlow, in consternation; "and I trust in goodness, Sara, you did not propose to do anything for them, as you say?"

"No, indeed; I had not the courage," said Sara. "I never have sense enough to do such things. Complain! oh, dear no; he did not complain. But he was so much in earnest about it, you know, *apropos* of that silly speech I made at luncheon, that he made me quite uncomfortable. Is he a—a gentleman, papa?"

"He is my clerk," said Mr. Brownlow, shortly; and then the conversation dropped. Sara was not a young woman to be stopped in this way in ordinary cases, though she did stop this time, seeing her father fully meant it; but all the same she did not stop thinking which indeed, in her case, was a thing very difficult to do.

Then Mr. Brownlow began to nerve himself for a great effort. It excited him as nothing had excited him for many a long year. He drew his child's arm more closely through his own, and drew her nearer to him. They were going slowly down the avenue, upon which the afternoon sunshine lay warm, all marked and lined across by columns of trees, and the light shadows of the half-developed foliage. "Do you know," he said, "I have been thinking a great deal lately about a thing you once said to me. I don't know whether you meant it?"

"I never say anything I don't mean," said Sara, interrupting him; but she too felt that something more than usual was coming, and did not enlarge upon the subject. "What was it, papa?" she said, clinging still closer to his arm.

"You refused Motherwell," said Mr. Brownlow, "though he could have given you an excellent position, and is, they tell me, a very honest fellow. I told you to consider it, but you refused him, Sara."

"Well, no," said Sara, candidly; "refusing people is very clumsy sort of work, unless you want to tell of it after, and that is mean. I did

not refuse him. I only contrived, you know, that he should not speak."

" Well, I suppose it comes to about the same thing," said Mr. Brownlow. " What I am going to say now is very serious. You once told me you would marry the man I asked you to marry. Hush, my darling, don't speak yet. I daresay you never thought I would ask such a proof of confidence from you; but there are strange turns in circumstances. I am not going to be cruel, like a tyrannical father in a book; but if I were to ask you to do such a great thing for me — to do it blindly without asking questions, to try to love and to marry a man, not of your own choice, but mine — Sara, would you do it? Don't speak yet. I would not bind you. At the last moment you should be free to withdraw from the bargain" —

" Let me speak, papa!" cried Sara. " Do you mean to say that you *need* this — that you really *want* it? Is it something that can't be done any other way? first tell me that."

" I don't think it can be done any other way," said Mr. Brownlow, sadly, with a sigh.

" Then, of course, I will do it," said Sara. She turned to him as she spoke, and fixed her eyes intently on his face. Her levity, her lightness, her careless freedom were all gone. No doubt she had meant the original promise, as she said, but she had made it with a certain gay bravado, little dreaming of anything to follow. Now she was suddenly sobered and silenced. There was no mistaking the reality in Mr. Brownlow's face. Sara was not a careful thoughtful woman: she was a creature who leapt at conclusions, and would not linger over the most solemn decision. And then she was not old enough to see both sides of a question. She jumped at it, and gave her pledge, and fixed her fate more quickly than another temperament would have chosen a pair of gloves. But for all that she was very grave. She looked up in her father's face questioning him with her eyes. She was ready to put her life in his hands, to give him her future, her happiness, as if it had been a flower for his coat. But yet she was sufficiently roused to see that this was no laughing matter. " Of course I will do it," she repeated, without any grandeur of expression; but she never looked so grave, or had been so serious all her life.

As for her father, he looked at her with a gaze that seemed to devour her. He wanted to see into her heart. He wanted to look through and through those two blue spheres into the soul which was below, and he could not do it. He was so intent upon this that he did not even perceive at the first minute that she had consented. Then the words caught his ear and went to his heart — " Of course I will do it." When he caught the meaning strangely enough his object went altogether out of his mind, and he thought of nothing but of the half pathetic, unhesitating, magnificent generosity of his child. She had not asked a question, why or wherefore, but had given herself up at once with a kind of prodigal readiness. A sudden

gush of tears, such as had not refreshed them for years, came into Mr. Brownlow's eyes. Not that they ran over, or fell, or displayed themselves in any way, but they came up under the bushy eyebrows like water under reeds, making a certain glimmer in the shade. " My dear child! " he said, with a voice that had a jar in it such as profound emotion gives; and he gathered up her two little hands into his, and pressed them together, holding her fast to him. He was so touched that his impulse was to give her back her word, not to take advantage of it; to let everything go to ruin if it would, and keep his child safe. But was it not for herself? It was in the moment when this painful sweetness was going to his very heart, that he bent over her and kissed her on the forehead. He could not say anything, but there are many occasions, besides those proper to lovers, when that which is inexpressible may be put into a kiss. The touch of her father's lips on Sara's forehead told her a hundred things; love, sorrow, pain, and a certain poignant mixture of joy and humiliation. He could not have uttered a word to save his life. She was willing to do it, with a lavish youthful promptitude; and he, was he to accept the sacrifice? This was what John Brownlow was thinking when he stooped over her and pressed his lips on his child's brow. She had taken from him the power of speech.

Such a supreme moment cannot last. Sara, too, not knowing why, had felt that *serrement du cœur*, and had been pierced by the same poignant sweetness. But she knew little reason for it, and none in particular why her father should be so moved, and her spirits came back to her long before his did. She walked along by his side in silence, feeling by the close pressure of her hands that he had not quite come to himself, for some time after she had come back to herself. With every step she took the impression glided off Sara's mind; her natural light-heartedness returned to her. Moreover, she was not to be compelled to marry that very day, so there was no need for being miserable about it just yet at least. She was about to speak half-a-dozen times before she really ventured on utterance; and when at last she took her step out of the solemnity and sublimity of the situation, this was how Sara plunged into it, without any interval of repose.

" I beg your pardon, papa; I would not trouble you if I could help it. But please, now it is all decided, will you just tell me — am I to marry anybody that turns up? or is there any one in particular? I beg your pardon, but one likes to know."

Mr. Brownlow was struck by this demand, as was to be expected. It affected his nerves, though nobody had been aware that he had any nerves. He gave an abrupt, short laugh, which was not very merry, and clasped her hands tighter than ever in his.

" Sara" he said, " this is not a joke. Do you know there is scarcely anything I would not have done rather than ask this of you? It is a very serious matter to me."

"I am sure I am treating it very seriously," said Sara. "I don't take it for a joke; but you see papa, there is a difference. What you care for is that it should be settled. It is not you that have the marrying to do; but for my part it is *that* that is of the most importance. I should rather like to know who it was, if it would be the same to you."

Once more Mr. Brownlow pressed in his own the soft, slender hands, he held. "You shall know in time — you shall know in good time," he said, "if it is inevitable;" and he gave a sort of moan over her as a woman might have done. His beautiful* child! who was fit for a prince's bride, if any prince were good enough. Perhaps even yet the necessity might be escaped.

"But I should like to know now," said Sara; and then she gave a little start, and coloured suddenly, and looked him quickly, keenly in the face! "Papa!" she said; "— 'you don't mean — do you mean — this Mr. Powys, perhaps?'"

Mr. Brownlow actually shrank from her eye. He grew pale, almost green; faltered, dropped her hands — "My darling!" he said feebly. He had not once dreamt of making any revelation on this subject. He had not even intended to put it to her at all, had it not come to him, as it were, by necessity; and consequently he was quite unprepared to defend himself. As for Sara, she clung to him closer, and looked him still more keenly in the eyes.

"Tell me," she said; "I will keep my word all the same. It will make no difference to me. Papa, tell me! it is better I should know at once."

"You ought not to have asked me that question, Sara," said Mr. Brownlow, recovering himself; "If I ask such a sacrifice of you, you shall know all about it in good time. I can't tell, my own scheme does not look so reasonable to me as it did — I may give it up altogether. But in the mean time don't ask me any more questions. And if you should repent, even at the last moment" —

"But if it is necessary to you, papa?" said Sara, opening her eyes — "if it has to be done, what does it matter whether I repent or not?"

"Nothing is necessary to me that would cost your happiness," said Mr. Brownlow. And then they went on again for some time in silence. As for Sara, she had no inclination to have the magnificence of her sacrifice thus interfered with. For the moment her feeling was that, on the whole it would even be better that the marriage to which she devoted herself should be an unhappy and unfit one. If it were happy it would not be a sacrifice; and to be able to repent at the last, like any commonplace young woman following her own inclinations, was not at all according to Sara's estimation of the contract. She went on by her father's side, thinking of that and of some other things in silence.

* The fact was, Sara was not beautiful. There was not the least trace of perfection about her; but her father had prepossessions and prejudices, such as parents are apt to have, unphilosophical as it may be.

Her thoughts were of a very different tenor from his. She was not taking the matter tragically as he supposed — no blank veil had been thrown over Sara's future by this intimation, though Mr. Brownlow, walking absorbed by her side, was inclined to think so. On the contrary, her imagination had begun to play with the idea lightly, as with a far-off possibility in which there was some excitement, and even some amusement possible. While her father relapsed into painful consideration of the whole subject, Sara went on demurely by his side, not without the dawning of a smile about the corners of her mouth. There was nothing said between them for a long time. It seemed to Mr. Brownlow as if the conversation had broken off at such a point that it would be hard to recommence it. He seemed to have committed and betrayed himself without doing any good whatever by it; and he was wroth at his own weakness. Softening of the brain! There might be something in what the Rector said. Perhaps it was disease, and not the pressure of circumstances, which had made him to take seriously the first note of alarm. Perhaps his own scheme to secure Brownlows and his fortune to Sara was premature, if not unnecessary. It was while he was thus opening up anew the whole matter, that Sara at last ventured to betray the tenor of her thoughts.

"Papa," she said, "I asked you a question just now, and you did not answer me; but answer me now, for I want to know. This — this — gentleman — Mr. Powys. Is he — a gentleman, papa?"

"I told you he was my clerk, Sara," said Mr. Brownlow, much annoyed by the question.

"I know you did, but that is not quite enough. A man may be a gentleman though he is a clerk. I want a plain answer," said Sara, looking up again into her father's face.

And he was not without the common weakness of Englishmen for good connections — very far from that. He would not have minded, to tell the truth, giving a thousand pounds or so on the spot to any known family of Powys which would have adopted the young Canadian into its bosom. "I don't know what Powys has to do with the matter," he said; and then unconsciously his tone changed. "It is a good name; and I think — I imagine — he must belong somehow to the Lady Powys who once lived near Masterton. His father was well born, but, I believe," added Mr. Brownlow, with a slight shiver, "that he married — beneath him. I think so. I can't say I am quite sure."

"I should have thought you would have known everything," said Sara. "Of course, papa, you know I am dying to ask you a hundred questions, but I won't, if you will only just tell me one thing. A girl may promise to accept any one — whom — whom her people wish her to have; but is it as certain," said Sara, solemnly, "that he — will have me?"

Then Mr. Brownlow stood still for a moment, looking with wonder, incomprehension, and a certain mixture of awe and dismay upon

his child. Sara, obeying his movement, stood still also with her eyes cast down, and just showing a glimmer of malice under their lids, with the colour glowing softly in her cheeks, with the ghost of a smile coming and going round her pretty mouth. "Oh child, child!" was all Mr. Brownlow said. He was moved to smile in spite of himself, but he was more moved to wonder. After all, she was making a joke of it — or was it really possible that, in this careless smiling way, the young creature, who had thrust her life into his hands like a flower, to be disposed of as he would, was going forward to meet all unknown evils and dangers? The sober, steady, calculating man could understand a great many things more abstruse, but he could not understand this.

This, however, was about the end of their conference, for they had reached old Betty's cottage by this time, who came out, ungrateful old woman as she was, to curtsey as humbly to Mr. Brownlow as if he had been twenty old squires, and to ask after his health. And Sara had occasion to speak to her friend Pamela on the other side of the way. It was not consistent with the father's dignity, of course, to go with her to visit those humble neighbours, but he stood at the gate with old Betty behind in whirl of curtseys, watching while Sara's tall, straight, graceful figure went across the road, and Pamela, with her little, fresh, bright, dewy face, like an April morning, came running out to meet her. "Poor little thing!" Mr. Brownlow said to himself — though he could not have explained why he was sorry for Pamela; and then he turned back slowly and went home, crossing the long shadows of the trees. He was not satisfied with himself or with his day's work. He was like a doctor accustomed to regard with a cool and impartial eye the diseases of others, but much at a loss when he had his own personal pains in hand. He was uneasy and ashamed when he was alone and reminded himself that he had managed very badly. What was he to do? Was he to act as a doctor would, and put his domestic malady into the hands of a brother practitioner? But this was a suggestion at which he shuddered. Was he to take Jack into his counsel and get the aid of his judgment? — but Jack was worse, a thousand times worse, than a stranger. He had all his life been considered a very clever lawyer, and he knew it: he had got scores of people out of scrapes, and, one way or other, half the country was beholden to him; and he could do nothing but get himself deeper and deeper into his own miserable scrape. Faint thoughts of making it into "a case" and taking opinions on it — taking Wrinkell's opinion, for instance, quietly, his old friend who had a clear head and a great deal of experience — came into his mind. He had made a muddle of it himself. And then the Rector's question recurred to him with still greater force — could it be softening of the brain? Perhaps it would be best to speak to the doctor first of all.

Meanwhile Sara had gone into Mrs. Swayne's little dark parlour, out of the sunshine, and had seated herself at Pamela's post in the window, very dreamy and full of thought. She did not even speak for a long time, but let her little friend prattle to her. "I saw you and Mr. Brownlow coming down the avenue," said Pamela; "what a long time you were, and how strange it looked! Sometimes you had a great deal to say, and then for a long time you would walk on and on, and never look at each other. Was he scolding you? Sometimes I thought he was."

Sara made no answer to this question; she only uttered a long, somewhat demonstrative sigh, and then went off upon a way of her own. "I wonder how it would have felt to have had a mother?" she said, and sighed again to her companion's great dismay.

"How it would have felt?" said Pamela; "That is just the one thing that makes me feel I don't envy you. You have quantities and quantities of fine things, but I have mamma."

"And I have papa," said Sara, quickly, not disposed to be set at a disadvantage; "that was not what I meant. Sometimes, though you may think it very wicked, I feel as if I was rather glad; for, of course, if mamma had been living it would have been very different for me; and then sometimes I think I would give a great deal — Look here. I don't like talking of such things; but did you ever think what you would do if you were married? Fanny Hardcastle likes talking of it. How do you think you should feel? to the — gentleman, you know?"

"Think," said Pamela; "does one need to think about it? love him, to be sure." And this she said with a rising colour, and with two rays of new light waking up in her eyes.

"Ah, love him," said Sara; "it is very easy to talk; but how are you to love him? that does not come of itself just when it is told, you know; at least I suppose it doesn't — I am sure I never tried."

"But if you did not love him, of course you would not marry him," said Pamela, getting confused.

"Yes — that is just one of the things it is so easy to say," said Sara; "and I suppose at your age you don't know any better. Don't you know that people *have* to marry whether they like it or not? and when they never, never would have thought of it themselves? I suppose," said Sara, in the strength of her superior knowledge, "that most of us are married like that. Because it suits our people, or because — I don't know what — anything but one's own will." And this little speech the young martyr again rounded with a sigh.

"Are you going to be married?" said Pamela, drawing a footstool close to her friend's feet, and looking up with awe into her face. "I wish you would tell me. Mamma has gone to Dewsbury, and she will not be back for an hour. Oh, do tell me — I will never repeat it to any-

body. And, dear Miss Brownlow, if you don't love him?" —

"Hush," said Sara, "I never said anything about a him. It is you who are such a romantic little girl. What I was speaking of was one's duty; one has to do one's duty whether one likes it or not."

This oracular speech was very disappointing to Pamela. She looked up eagerly with her bright eyes, trying to make out the romance which she had no doubt existed. "I can fancy," she said, softly, "why you wanted your mother;" and her little hand stole into Sara's, which lay on her knee. Sara did not resist the soft caress. She took the hand, and pressed it close between her own, which were longer, and not so rounded and childlike; and then, being a girl of uncertain disposition, she laughed, to Pamela's great surprise and dismay.

"I think, perhaps, I like to be my own mistress best," she said; "if mamma had lived she never would have let me do anything I wanted to do—and then most likely she would not have known what I meant. It is Jack, you know, who is most like mamma."

"But he is very nice," said Pamela, quickly; and then she bent down her head as quickly, feeling the hot crimson rushing to her face, though she did not well know why. Sara took no notice of it—never observed it, indeed—and kept smoothing down in her own her little neighbour's soft small hand.

"Oh, yes," she said, "and I am very fond of my brother; only he and I are not alike, you know. I wonder who Jack will marry, if he ever marries; but it is very fine to hear him talk of that—perhaps he never did to you. He is so scornful of everybody who falls in love, and calls them asses, and all sorts of things. I should just like to see him fall in love himself. If he were to make a very foolish marriage it would be fun. They say those dreadfully wise people always do."

"Do they?" said Pamela; and she bent down to look at the border of her little blue silk apron, and to set it to rights, very energetically, with her unoccupied hand. But she did not ask any further questions; and so the two girls sat together for a few minutes, hand clasped in hand, the head of the one almost touching the other, yet each far afield in her own thoughts; of which, to tell the truth, though she was so much the elder and the wiser, Sara's thoughts were the least painful, the least heavy, of the two.

"You don't give me any advice, Pamela," she said at last. "Come up the avenue with me at least. Papa has gone home, and it is quite dark here out of the sun. Put on your hat and come with me. I like the light when it slants so, and falls in long lines. I think you have a headache to-day, and a walk will do you good."

"Yes, I think I have a little headache," said Pamela, softly; and she put on her hat and followed her companion out. The sunshine had passed beyond Betty's cottage, and cut the

avenue obliquely in two—the one end all light, the other all gloom. The two young creatures ran lightly across the shady end, Sara, as always, leading the way. Her mind, it is true, was as full as it could be of her father's communication, but the burden sat lightly on her. Now and then a word or two would tingle, as it were, in her ears; now and then it would occur to her that her fate was sealed, as she said, and a sigh, half false half true, would come to her lips; but, in the mean time, she was more amused by the novelty of the position than discouraged by the approach of fate.

"What are you thinking of?" she said, when they came into the tender light in the further part of the avenue; for the two, by this time, had slackened their pace, and drawn close together, as is the wont of girls, though they did not speak.

"I was only looking at our shadows going before us," said Pamela, and this time the little girl echoed very softly Sara's sigh.

"They are not at all beautiful to look at; they are shadows on stilts," said Sara; "you might think of something more interesting than that."

"But I wish something did go before us like that to show the way," said Pamela. "I wish it was true about guardian angels—if we could only see them, that is to say; and then it is so difficult to know!" —

"What," said Sara; "you are too young to want a guardian angel; you are not much more than a little angel yourself. When one has begun to go daily further from the east, one knows the good of being quite a child."

"But I am not quite a child," said Pamela, under her breath.

"Oh yes, you are. But look here, Jack must be coming; don't you hear the wheels? I did not know it was so late. Shall you mind going back alone, for I must run and dress? And please come to me in the morning as soon as ever they are gone, I have such heaps of things to say."

Saying this, Sara ran off, flying along under the trees, she and her shadow; and poor little Pamela, not so much distressed as perhaps she ought to have been to be left alone, turned back towards the house. The dogcart was audible before it dashed through the gate, and Pamela's heart beat, keeping time with the ringing of the mare's feet and the sound of the wheels. But it stopped before Betty's door, and some one jumped down, and the mare and the dogcart and the groom dashed past Pamela in a kind of whirlwind. Mr. John had keen eyes, and saw something before him in the avenue; and he was quick-witted, and timed his inquiries after Betty in the most prudent way. Before Pamela, whose heart beat louder than ever, was half-way down the avenue, he had joined her, evidently, whatever Betty or Mrs. Swayne might say to the contrary, in the most purely accidental way.

"This is luck," said Jack; "I have not seen

you for two whole days, except at the window, which doesn't count. I don't know how we managed to endure the dulness before that window came to be inhabited. Come this way a little under the chestnuts — you have the sun in your eyes."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Pamela, "and I must not wait; I am going home."

"I suppose you have been walking with Sara, and she has left you to go home alone," said Jack; "it is like her. She never thinks of anything. But tell me what you have been doing these two frightfully long days?"

From which it will be seen that Mr. John, as well as his sister, had made a little progress towards intimacy since he became first acquainted with the lodgers at Mrs. Swayne's.

"I don't think they have been frightfully long days," said Pamela, making the least little timid response to his emphasis and to his eyes — wrong, no doubt, but almost inevitable. "I have been doing nothing more than usual; mamma has wanted me, that is all."

"Then it is too bad of mamma," said Jack; "you know you ought to be out every day. I must come and talk to her about it — air and exercise, you know."

"But you are not a doctor," said Pamela, with a soft ring of laughter — not that he was witty, but that the poor child was happy, and showed it in spite of herself; for Mr. John had turned, and was walking down the avenue, very slowly, pausing almost every minute, and not at all like a man who was going home to dinner. He was still young. I suppose that was why he preferred Pamela to the more momentous fact which was in course of preparation at the great house.

"I am a little of everything," he said; "I should like to go out to Australia, and get a farm, and keep sheep. Don't you like the old stories and the old pictures with the shepherdesses? If you had a little hut all covered with flowers, and a crook with ribbons!"

"Oh, but I should not like to be a shepherdess," cried Pamela, in haste.

"Shouldn't you? Well, I did not mean that; but to go out into the bush, or the backwoods, or whatever they call it, and do everything, and

get everything for one's self. Shouldn't you like that? Better than all the nonsense and all the ceremony here," said Jack, bending down to see under the shade of her hat, which, as it happened, was difficult enough.

"We don't have much ceremony," said Pamela, "but if I was a lady like your sister —"

"Like Sara!" said Jack; and he nodded his head with a little brotherly contempt. "Don't be anything different from what you are, please. I should like people to wear always the same dress, and keep exactly as they were when — the first time, you know. I like you, for instance, in your red cloak. I never see a red cloak without thinking of you. I hope you will keep that one for ever and ever," said the philosophical youth. As for Pamela she could not but feel a little confused, wondering whether this, or Sara's description of her brother, was the reality. And she should not have known what to answer but that the bell at the house interfered in her behalf, and began to sound forth its touching call — a sound that could not be gainsaid.

"There is the bell," she cried; "you will be too late for dinner. Oh, please, don't come any further. There is old Betty looking out."

"Bother dinner," said Mr. John, "and old Betty too," he added under his breath. He had taken her hand, the same hand which Sara had been holding, to bid her good-bye, no doubt in the ordinary way. At all events, old Betty's vicinity made the farewell all that politeness required. But he did not leave her until he had opened the gate for her, and watched her enter at her own door. "When my sister leaves Miss Preston in the avenue," he said, turning gravely to Betty, with that severe propriety for which he was distinguished, "be sure you always see her safely home; she is too young to walk about alone." And with these dignified words Mr. John walked on, having seen the last of her, leaving Betty speechless with amazement. "As if I done it!" Betty said. And then he went home to dinner. Thus both Mr. Brownlow's children, though he did not know it, had begun to make little speculations for themselves in undiscovered ways.

JASPER. — This durable and beautiful substance, observes the *Scientific Review*, which has hitherto been obtainable only in limited quantities, chiefly from Siberia and Russia, is now procured, to almost any required extent, at Saint Gervais, in Savoy, where the quarry has a surface of at least 24,000 square yards, and a depth of about twenty-two yards. It is a variety of quartz, which is characterized by being opaque, however thin the plates into which it may be cut, and is of various colours — red,

brown, green, &c., that at present used for jewellery being green with red spots. It resists for indefinite periods the action of the weather, and is an excellent material for ornamentation, whether as stands for small objects, &c., or as panels, columns, &c., to be used by the architect. Some of what is found at Saint Gervais bears close resemblance to the beautiful species termed *rouge antique*; it is of a fine red, and without veins.

From Fraser's Magazine.

CHARLES LAMB.

'How pleasant it is to reflect that all these lovers of books have *themselves become books*,' says Leigh Hunt, when thinking over his favourite book-lovers of the past. And, he continues, 'I should like to remain visible in this shape. I should like to survive so, were it only for the sake of those who love me in private, knowing as I do, what a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind, when he is no more.' In glancing with Leigh Hunt round our book-shelves we cannot but feel that of all human spirits who remain visible in book shape, to keep immortal company with us, there is not one who comes nearer home to us than Charles Lamb. His writings are at the head of those which we take closely to heart in a sort of bed and board acquaintanceship, because the authors have given themselves to us so intimately in the shape of their books, that they come near to us in the warmth of real life; the spirit being so much more than the mere letter. In the visibility of embodied personality, the books of Charles Lamb are of a kind in which the species almost constitutes the genus. He lives in them as fully, as vividly, as Johnson does in Boswell's *Life* and draws us to him by a tie of tenderer love. He keeps on talking to us, not like a book, but as in life, making the old curious inquisition into the commonplaces of nature, and minor motives of humanity, with the old quaint mental twist in his views; the naivete that makes confession so charming; passing over his own troubles with that pathetic briskness with which his freakish humour kept the face of things astir, like a phosphorescent sea at night, to hide the darkling depths below; the wit luminous in his eye, the stammer on his tongue, the touch of St. Vitus in his mental movement; his frank heart and open hand making his frailties more human than some good people's virtues; — and the acquaintanceship keeps growing until we know him personally, even as Hunt and Hazlitt, Jem White or Wordsworth did, as dear lovable and gentle Charles Lamb.

With the work of his friend Mr. Proctor (or Barry Cornwall) most probably closes the record of Charles Lamb's life. We know now all that we are likely to gather from personal observers. The story is told, or rather we have the complete data for a story that will be told again and again so long as the English language lives in this world. We are enabled to see him as he lived and moved in the eyes of friends and

companions, as well as look at his strange life and delightful character from within, by his own light. We know with what quiet heroism he bore his load for life; how lightly he jested with his lips when his heart was so heavy at times; how deftly he turned his mortal pain into immortal pleasure for us. The key to Charles Lamb's writing may be found in his unique character, and the main clues to his character are visible in his life.

Lamb was born almost in penury, and brought up as a charity boy. This is the plain truth, although the good Sergeant Talfourd amiably tries to festoon the fact and drape Lamb's first entrance on the stage of life as elegantly as he can. He has a knack of cutting the beef with the ham-knife to ennable the flavour: or shall we say, he tells the truth so lovingly? And so blandly does he allude to the poor parents who were 'endued with sentiments and with manners which might well become the gentlest blood,' and the 'daily beauty of a cheerful submission to a state bordering on the servile,' that on our first introduction we feel a pervading air of gentility. In spite of which, Charles Lamb was one of those favourite children of nature who get put out to that old nurse — of many heroic spirits the stern mother — Poverty.

Charles Lamb was born on the 18th of February 1775, in one of the chambers of the Temple. His father was clerk to Mr. Samuel Salt, a barrister, one of the benchers of the Inner Temple, or rather, he was a kind of factotum, doing all the service that his master required, and doing it cleverly too. The father's family came from Lincolnshire, the mother's from Hertfordshire, and Lamb in one of his essays claims the latter county for his 'native fields.' Lamb never attempted to trace his ancestry beyond two or three generations. Perhaps he shared in the feeling illustrated by Sydney Smith, who said his grandfather had disappeared about the time of the assizes, and they made no further inquiries. He certainly had no false pride on the subject of his birth, and he left it to his brother John to keep up the dignity of their house.

Lamb had only one brother and one sister; John being twelve and Mary ten years older than himself. He spent the first seven years of his life in the Temple. There he had early access to Mr. Salt's books, and was 'tumbled into a spacious closet of good old English reading, and browsed at will on that fair and wholesome pastureage.' It is thus he speaks of his sister Mary, but the description doubtless applies

to himself. Here he first began to wander in those twisted walks of literature, which he loved so much in after days, and snuff the odour of old books, as fragrant to him as the 'blossoms of the tree of knowledge which grew in the happy orchard.' He seems to have been a born antique in certain tendencies; and these early surroundings, which threw over him a shadow of the past, must have deepened that antique colouring of his mind.

From the long line of dark chambers, and narrow lane and lowering archway, the boy issued forth to walk the 'old and awful cloisters of Edward.' When he was nearly eight years of age he was presented to the school of Christ's Hospital, where he remained as a scholar for some seven years. Here he appears to have been a little like Charlotte Brontë when she first went to school and her companions were romping around her: she said she could not play—she had not learned to play. 'While others were all fire and play, he stole along with all the self-concentration of a young monk.' And here he learned, amongst other things, to question the propriety of 'grace before meat,' especially such graces as prefaced their 'cold bread and cheese suppers with a preamble, connecting with that humble blessing a recognition of benefits the most awful and overwhelming to the imagination, which religion has to offer.' He also learned the value of having a home near at hand, and the preciousness of a sister Mary in it. To her thoughtful care, he was indebted for many little additions to the school-fare, such as 'slices of extraordinary bread and butter,' 'lumps of double refined sugar,' a smack of ginger or cinnamon to make his 'mess of millet' less repugnant, and, crowning treat of all, a 'hot plate of roast veal,' or the 'more tempting griskin' that had been cooked at home. These dainties were brought to him by his good old aunt, who would 'toddle' off with any good thing she could get for him; and he used to feel ashamed to see her come and sit down on the 'old coal-hole steps' and open her apron and bring out her basin. 'I remember,' says Lamb, 'the contending passions at the unfolding—there was love for the bringer; shame for the things brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and at the top of all, hunger predominant.'

Lamb remained at Christ's Hospital seven years. Here he made the acquaintance of Coleridge, who was his elder by two years, and who had already begun to lift up his vi-

sionary brow and talk of coming glories and vast projects as he looked down long shining vistas of the future. His influence on Lamb was unquestionably great, and the friendship deepened all through life. Such a radiating mind could not come near others without warming and quickening them into a larger life. In dedicating his first collected works to Coleridge (1818), Lamb says, 'You first kindled in me, if not the power, yet the love of poetry, and beauty, and kindness.' But in matters political and religious, Lamb never became a very enthusiastic disciple. He listened and wondered at the new heavens that rose, 'like an exhalation,' over the old earth at the incantation of Coleridge's talk; but a bit of pavement that he could feel firm under foot was more to the mind of Lamb than all the cloudlands going. He had not the large diffusive imagination of his friend, and his whole nature clung to those realities that help to concentrate the mind *here and now*. He dwelt in the present, and was no dim explorer of the future; he nestled in the homely valleys, and did not range the mountain tops of thought. Whatsoever poetic tinge the mind of Lamb may have caught from the glory of Coleridge's sunrise, it certainly was not dyed for life with any colour not its own.

On leaving Christ's Hospital, Lamb had to enter the workday world instead of going to college, as he would have wished. His brother John had a comfortable clerkship in the 'South Sea House,' and from the 'old and awful cloisters' to this grave above ground Lamb went to continue his musings and colour his mind, and earn a little money. The old house stood, says Lamb, amongst so many richer houses, their 'poor neighbour out of business.' Some forms of business were still kept up, but the soul had long since fled. Lamb tells us that the absence of bustle was delightful, the indolence almost cloisterly. With what reverence he would pace the great bare rooms and courts at eventide. How he would ponder over the 'dead tomes' and ancient portraits; the dusty maps of Mexico, 'dim as dreams,' and 'soundings of the bay of Panama.'

At seventeen years of age, Lamb obtained an appointment as clerk in the accountant's office of the East India Company, and in the India house he served for the space of thirty-three years. It has been a matter of regret to many that Charles Lamb should have been doomed for so long to the drudgery of the desk. And, naturally enough, he did not take to it because he liked it, but because he was in the habit of sub-

mitting with a wise cheerfulness to necessity, and of standing upright under his burthen instead of stooping to make it heavier. Not but what he at times kicked against the clerk's stool, and almost cursed the desk at which he sat. He found his duties continually interfering with his tendency to write those delightful epistles to his friends. He complains to Cottle of those bothering clerks and brokers who 'always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely, but I think you do not like swearing.' On another occasion he did break out in what he calls a 'maddish letter' to Wordsworth, and 'exclaim a little profanely.' In despite of which, the clerkship was Lamb's best and only means of living by his pen. Hazlitt, who wrote with ten times the facility of Lamb, could hardly earn his bread by it. It was well for Lamb that he had not to live by literature. Six or seven hours' labour a day, with a steady income, always sure, always increasing, was a more sensible, a *surer* thing for Charles Lamb than if he had sought to work his imagination alone. The time came when he had enough to brood over, and he did not need more brooding-time. To find an anchorage six hours a day for his hurt mind and vagrant temperament, to be taken out of his introspective self, was a god-send to Charles Lamb. It is also better for the world. The literary result of his life is, that we have his best expressed in the smallest compass; and if we can get a man's best in four volumes, it is a pity that circumstances should compel him to dilute it into twenty.

They do say that Lamb was late at office sometimes, and that his superior remonstrated with him. 'Mr. Lamb,' says he, 'I am sorry to find that you are the last to arrive of a morning.' 'Oh, yes,' replied Lamb; 'but then you know, I make up for it. I am always the first to leave in the afternoon.' The official is said to have perceived something logical in the explanation, but to have had only a confused sense of its satisfactoriness.

I repeat, the time came when the dull drudgery at the India House was a blessing to poor Lamb, and the desk was a tangible something on which to lay hold and steady his confused senses. There was an hereditary taint of insanity in Lamb's family. And when Charles had turned his twentieth year this broke out in himself. He refers to the immediate cause of madness in words to be yet quoted. On this occasion

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Lamb spent six weeks in a lunatic asylum at Hoxton. He writes to Coleridge in 1796, saying 'The six weeks that finished last year and began this your humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse. I am somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one; but mad I was.' And he tells his friend, 'At some future time I will amuse you with an account as full as memory will permit of the strange turn my fancy took. I look back upon it at times with a gloomy kind of envy; for, while it lasted, I had many, many hours of pure happiness. Dream not, Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of fancy till you have gone mad. All now seems to me vapid — comparatively so. Excuse this selfish digression.' His sister Mary had previously suffered from the same fearful malady.

In this year (1796) occurred the dreadful deed which clouded the whole of Lamb's after life. The family had removed from the Temple to Little Queen Street, Holborn. The father had left the service of Mr. Salt, and the mother was ill and bedridden. Mary had been nursing her mother day and night with the utmost devotedness: 'Of all people in the world,' says Lamb, 'she was most thoroughly devoid of all selfishness.' In the September of this year she became moody and queer, and on the 23rd of the month her madness broke loose. Just before dinner-time she snatched up a case-knife and ran round the room after the little girl who was her apprentice; hurled about the knives and forks, one of which struck her father on the forehead and felled him to the floor; then, as a climax to her frenzied fit, she stabbed her mother to the heart. Charles was at hand, but could only seize the knife and prevent her doing further mischief. Mary was placed in an asylum for a time, where her temporary recovery was rapid. But what a recovery! — the cloud of madness only passing away to reveal all the more clearly what the poor thing had done! Now arose the question whether the sister should be confined for life. The brother John advocated this, and other friends chimed in with his view. Mary herself expected it would be so.

Poor thing [writes Charles], they say she was but the other morning saying she knew she must go to Bethlehem for life; that one of her brothers would have it so; the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often, as she passed Bethlehem, thought it likely: 'Here it may be my fate to end my days.'

Charles, however, pleaded for her release, and promised to take her, and care for her and watch over her. And well he kept his word. Only one despairing cry did he utter through long years of painful endurance. In a letter to Coleridge, written May 12th, 1800, he almost wishes that poor Mary were dead. He had just seen her off to the asylum the day before. 'She will get better again,' he says; 'but this constant liability to relapse is dreadful.' Nor is it the least of their evils that her case and their story are so well known. They are in a manner marked, and have to hear the whisperings around them. On this occasion he writes with nothing in the house but Hetty's dead body to keep him company. 'To-morrow I bury her' (an old maid-servant of theirs); 'and then I shall be quite alone. My heart is quite sunk. I am completely shipwrecked. I almost wish that Mary were dead.' Indeed, this tale of the Lambs, brother and sister, going forth into their wilderness of woe to live their life of 'dual loneliness' is touching as anything that ever took place since the going forth of Ishmael and his mother into the desert. It is a tale to shake the hearts of grown men, and make them yearn over this forlorn pair feelingly as ever the heart of childhood aches over those 'pretty babes' who wandered hand in hand to and fro in the wood, and

When they saw the darksome night,
They sat them down and cried.

closely as Lamb and his sister clung together, and dear as grew their companionship in such desolation, they were compelled to part so often, after all; to part with the bitterness of that separation when the mind of the one is about to enter its cloud and leave all life dark for both—the one lost in the darkness within, the other left groping unavailingly in the darkness without. They generally knew when the worst fits of insanity were coming on, and Charles would ask for a day's absence from office as if for a day's pleasure. He would take his sister by the arm, and these two poor anguished souls made the best of their way to the asylum. They have been met, carrying the strait waistcoat with them, the tears running down their cheeks, hurrying along as fast as they could on purpose to get there before the gathering blackness burst and they were caught in the full fury of the storm.

In electing to live alone for his sister, Charles Lamb was undoubtedly bidding

farewell to his love's young dream—his one tender passion for some fair 'Alice W—n.' He many times mentions this young lady. In his *Dream Children: a Reverie*, he has a vision of what might have been had he married her; and he says:

I told how, for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens.

He speaks of a picture which he had seen as—

that beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb; with the bright yellow Hertfordshire hair, and eye of walchet hue—so like my Alice.

After he had been in the lunatic asylum, he tells Coleridge that his head had run upon him a good deal in his madness, 'as much almost as on another person, who was the more immediate cause of my frenzy.' He wrote poetry, too, about his Alice, kept a little journal of his love for her, and tells us that his sister Mary would often lend an ear to his 'desponding lovesick lay.' But the poetry is lost for us: the journal was burnt, his passion was put away, as it were a childish thing, when Lamb rose up in his sterner manhood for his terrible conflict with calamity. Did the lovely Alice quite fade away, one wonders; or did she not live on in that image of purity which ever nestled and smiled at the heart of Charles Lamb's life, clear and tremulous as the dew-drop in a flower, breathing sweetness and shedding grace?

Mind you, Lamb had no notion of anything heroic in thus giving up all to live for his sister, yet the act, as De Quincy justly says, rises into a grandeur not paralleled once in a generation. And so we linger over it, and say all honour to him

Whom neither shape of danger could dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
Turned his necessity to glorious gain.

Lamb was in his twenty-first year when he stood alone in the world, and took upon himself the burthen of his family. It was a desolate home and a desolate outlook to which Mary returned after the awful deed that deprived them of a mother. Great was their need of reliance on Him who, as

Charles said with his pathetic wit, 'tempers the wind to the shorn Lambs.'

My poor, dear, dearest sister [Lamb writes], the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgment on our house, is restored to her senses — to a dreadful sense of what has passed; awful to her mind, but tempered with a religious resignation. She knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a fit of frenzy and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. She bears her situation as one who has no right to complain.

With what entireness Lamb lived for his sister, and with what affectionate solicitude he sought to solace her we may partly gather from one of his letters; he is speaking of visiting, and says:

It was not a family where I could take Mary with me, and I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in any pleasures I take without her.

He was 'all conscience and tender heart' to his sister. 'God love her!' he exclaims; 'may we two never love each other less.' And it may be added they never did. Mary Lamb was altogether worthy of her brother's love. In addition to the bond of affection which bound them together through affliction, she was a woman of great mental attractions. She was a continual reader. When in the asylum, Charles took care to furnish her with plenty of books, for they were like her daily bread. She was a delightful writer. Hazlitt held her to be the only woman he had met who could reason. 'Were I to give way to my feelings,' says Wordsworth, in the note to his poem on Charles Lamb, 'I should dwell not only on her genius and intellectual powers, but upon the delicacy and refinement of manner which she maintained inviolable under most trying circumstances. She was loved and honoured by all her brother's friends.'

After the death of his father, whose querulous selfishness in his dotage Lamb had borne with much meekness, he and his sister removed to Pentonville, where Lamb 'fell in love' with the beautiful Quakeress who used to pass him day after day, serenely unconscious of having a place in his regards. From Pentonville they removed to Southampton Buildings, on their way back to the Temple. This was in the year 1800. In the Temple, first at No. 16, Mitre Court, and next at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, they dwelt for some sixteen years. And there it was that Lamb gathered about him such a group of famous men, and held his

memorable evenings once a week. There was Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, Barnes of the *Times*, and Haydon the painter, Carey the translator of Dante, Godwin and Thelwall, Jem White and George Dyer; sometimes Coleridge and Wordsworth, Manning and Talfourd, Hood, and the gay and gentlemanly murderer Janus Weathercock.

Lamb was as catholic in his friendship as in his love of books. Speaking of Lamb's library, Leigh Hunt observes:

There Mr. Southey takes his place again with an old radical friend; there Jeremy Collier is at peace with Dryden; there the lion Martin Luther lies down with the Quaker lamb Sewell.

So was it with his personal friends. His sweetness of nature was the solvent of strongest differences; his attraction was powerful enough to gather and hold together the widest opposites. Lamb had many illustrious friends, with whose names his own will be handed on in immortal companionship. But we do not feel that his best known literary friends were those who got the nearest to him. He himself proclaims that his '*intimados*' were, to confess the truth, a 'ragged regiment' in the eye of the world — men whom he had found floating on the surface of society, and the colour or something else in the weed pleased him. The 'burrs stuck to him; but they were good, loving burrs for all that.' 'Some of Lamb's friends were strange characters,' says Wordsworth, 'whom his philanthropic peculiarities induced him to countenance. And the stranger the character, that is, the more original and unsophisticated, the closer Lamb stuck to them. There was Jem. White; he is nothing to the world now, yet, living, he was one of Lamb's earliest friends and most beloved of 'chums'; whom he could thoroughly 'cordialise' with; and, when he died, Lamb says, 'He carried away with him half the fun of the world, — of my world, at least.' This pleasant fellow endeared himself to Lamb, by giving an annual supper to the poor boy chimney-sweepers of London, upon which occasions Lamb presided at one of the tables. His description of the feast is as good as Burns's *Jolly Beggars*, the humour of the thing being akin in some respects. Jem White was in his glory doing an act of kindness which yielded so much fun for Lamb, who laughed till his eyes filled with tears to see the sable younkers 'lick in the unctuous meat,' and listen to Jem's 'more unctuous sayings,' followed by a cheer from the whole dark host,

at which 'hundreds of grinning teeth started the sight with their brightness.'

If Jem White was one half the fun of Lamb's world, surely George Dyer was the other half. He was guileless as Nathaniel; simple and 'prodigious' as Dominie Sampson; an unsophisticated native of the golden age; a 'mild Arcadian, ever blooming with fresh delight for Lamb; a daily beauty in the London streets, his verdant simplicity looking like a bit of evergreen there. He was as absent-minded as Bowles when he presented a friend with a copy of the Bible, and inscribed it 'from the author.' He had a head uniformly wrong, a heart uniformly right, and he dwelt in Clifford's Inn, said Lamb, 'like a dove on the asp's nest.' He was a friend indeed to Lamb. It was not merely what he said or did when present; he was for ever doing something that lasted Lamb for weeks in laughter. The very thought of him tickled Lamb to the heart-roots. On one occasion he informed George that Lord Castlereagh was the author of the Waverley novels, and off he trotted to communicate the fact to Leigh Hunt, who, being a public writer, ought to be immediately made acquainted with a secret so important.

'Is it true,' said Lamb to him, 'as commonly reported, that you are to be made a lord?' 'Oh dear no, Mr. Lamb, I could not think of such a thing; it is not true, I assure you.' 'I thought not,' said Lamb, 'and I contradict it wherever I go: but the Government will not ask your consent; they may raise you to the peerage without your ever knowing it.' 'I hope not, Mr. Lamb; indeed, indeed, I hope not; it would not suit me at all!' And Dyer went his way greatly bewildered, still pondering over the possibility of such a thing. The dear, good soul! What a god-send to Lamb was his unfathomable simplicity. How Lamb must have doated on his delightful unworldliness and crooned over him with 'murmurs made to bless.'

Other of his friends, such as Manning, Rickman, and Burney, Lamb must have been more fraternally familiar with than he could have been with the more famous men. 'I am glad you esteem Manning,' he writes to Coleridge in 1826, 'though you see but his husk or shrine. He discloses not, save to select worshippers; and will leave the world without any one hardly but me knowing how stupendous a creature he is.' This was the gentleman who went to China, as Lamb suggested, to teach perspective to the Chinese, and to whom he wrote some of his most amazing letters, in which his humour

turns everything topsy-turvy. Of Martin Burney, Lamb said he was on the top round of his ladder of friendship up which angels were yet climbing, and one or two, alas, descending.

Well known is the great love of Charles Lamb for his favourite London. He was a true child of its streets by birth; its scenery formed his earliest picture-books; the first awakening images of his young life. The 'fresco of the Virtues which Italianised the end of Paper Buildings' gave him his earliest hint of Allegory. His nature had struck root among the bricks of the old City, and there it clung lovingly and blossomed like some fragrant trailer breathing sweetness and freshness as if all Cockneydom was in flower. London was his home in spite of its homelessness for those who so often migrate as Lamb had done. He never breathed so freely as in its thronged thoroughfares. He loved its very smoke because it had been the medium most familiar to his vision. He liked to feel the pulse of its mighty heart and be in the rush of its great river of life. Its murmurs made a music that he could appreciate; he had an 'ear' for that! 'I would live in London,' he cries, 'shirtless, bookless. I love the sweet security of streets, and would set up my tabernacle there. He tells us how he would walk the streets with the tears running down his face for joy and sympathy with the fulness of its life:

Streets, streets, streets; markets, theatres, churches; Covent Gardens; shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstress, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying; authors in the streets, with spectacles — George Dyers (you know them by their gait); lamps lit at night; pastry-cooks' and silver smiths' shops; beautiful Quakers of Pentonville; noise of coaches; drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of 'Fire!' and 'Stop thief!' inns-of-court, with their learned air, and halls and butteries just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on *Melancholy*, and *Religio Medicis*, on every stall; — these are thy pleasures, O London with the many-sins. O City, abounding in — for these may Keswick and her giant-brood go hang.

This must have sounded singular to Wordsworth, who was as great a lover of his mountain solitudes as was Lamb of his London streets. The poet held that his friend was a 'scorner of the fields' more in show than truth. But it does not seem to have been so. Lamb declares that his love

for natural scenery would be abundantly satisfied by the patches of long waving grass and the stunted trees that blackened in some of the old church yards bordering on the Thames, and that a mob of happy faces crowding up at the pit door of Drury Lane Theatre, just at the hour of six, gave him ten thousand sincerer pleasures than he could have received from all the flocks of silly sheep that ever whitened the plains of Arcadia or Epsom Downs.

As he told Wordsworth, he certainly was not in the least romance-bit about Nature. He paid the great poet a visit in 1802. He entered the Lake country towards the close of a splendid day, and saw the mountains lying grand in a gorgeous sunset :

Such an impression [he says] I never received from objects of sight. Glorious creatures ! I shall never forget how ye lay about, in the dusk, like an entrenchment — gone to bed, as it seemed, for the night.

They haunted him after his return to London. But the great live city soon regained its old supremacy in his regards. Mountains he admitted were grand things to look at, but houses in streets were the places to live in ! And it was there that he most appreciated the country. He liked to hear the waters murmur, and leaves rustle, and birds sing, in the pages of some favourite book, he being shut in and safe within the sound of London. ‘But,’ he remarks by way of warning, ‘let not the lying poets be believed, who entice men from the cheerful streets.’

He preferred to be shut in-doors with a book on a winter’s evening to the finest summer sunset. ‘I dread the prospect of summer,’ he exclaimed, when he was in the country, ‘with his all-day long days. No need of his assistance to make the country dull.’ On being asked how he felt when amongst the mountains and lakes of Cumberland, he said, humorously, he was obliged to think of the ham and beef shop at the corner of St. Martin’s Lane. As though he felt it necessary to steady himself upon this common-place bit of well known reality amid the dizzying sublimities of nature.

One of the most provocative and entertaining aspects of Lamb’s character lies in this discovery, that all his manifold simplicities of nature and fragrant blossoming of delicate fancies, his love of the choice things in poetry, his keen zest for unsophisticated human beings, his sensibilities of a tremulous tenderness, had no root in a love of external nature. He needed no mental

nourishment from the country world of grass and leaves, jargoning of birds, lapse of pleasant waters, field scents or freshness of flowers. He asked not the baptism of the dewy dawn, or benediction of the closing day in any rural solitude. He could live and grow, and keep his nature *leafy* in London. This is a fact in human nature as interesting in a literary point of view, and as surprising as is the novel fact, so delightful to boyhood when it learns, for the first time, that mustard and cress may be grown with a bit of flannel and a drop of water, and does not need to take root in the earth at all.

After his thirty-three years’ service at the India House, Lamb was set free with a pension of 400*l.* a year. He made immense fun of his situation, or rather his out-of-situation. He was like a man suddenly released from the law of gravitation, who could not touch solid earth, and was blown hither and thither by every gust of his new life. At first he could but dimly apprehend his felicity, and was too confused to taste its fulness. He tells us that he wandered about thinking he was happy and knowing he was not. He could scarcely trust himself with himself. It was like passing out of time into eternity—for it is a sort of eternity when a man has all his time to himself. Unfortunately Lamb found that no work was worse than overwork. More particularly when he had retired into the country to spend his latter days. His leaving London we look upon as a huge mistake. London was his true city of refuge ; he who shared so largely in that feeling which made Charles Lloyd take lodgings in his more melancholy fits, at a brazier’s shop in Fetter Lane, close to Fleet Street, to drown his morbid thoughts with the roar of the city. The pity was that he and Mary could not have found such a home as Coleridge did among wise and generous friends.

It is curious to note in connection with this life-long feeling of Lamb’s that he died at last and was buried in the country. He died at Edmonton on December 27th, 1834, his end being somewhat sudden. His old friends had been failing and fading away one by one ; he greatly missed their old familiar faces — especially that of Coleridge, his friend for fifty years. One day when out for a morning walk he stumbled against a loose stone and fell. This, as he would have been delighted to point out, would hardly have happened in London. His face was slightly wounded and erysipelas followed. He had not the strength left to combat the disease, and he sank gradually, be-

ing quite calm and resigned, and gently passed away at the age of fifty-nine years. Mary Lamb lived on for some thirteen years, and then she was laid near him in the same grave in the churchyard of Edmonton; and united as they were in life by such bonds of affliction and tender ties of holy love, in death they were not divided.

Lamb was not one who could 'rest and expatriate in the life to come.' The thought of it made him shrink all the more snugly into our warm world of human clay, and draw about him more cosily the curtains that shut out the world not realised.

Of course, we have to allow for the play of his humour here as elsewhere. They are no true readers of Lamb who do not see that he made the most of his weakness — his delight in small associations, his eager grasp of this life, his shiverings when he stood in thought upon the brink of the next. But he had more than the common dread of the 'shadow feared of man.' He had an open loving heart for his fellow creatures, but kept it closed on the ghostly side of things. He confessed to an intolerable disinclination to dying: especially in winter time did this feeling beset him. He could see no satisfaction in the assurance that he should 'lie down with kings and emperors in death,' who in his lifetime never greatly coveted the society of such bedfellows. Why, to comfort him, 'must Alice W——n be a goblin?' Why must knowledge come to him, if at all, by some awkward experiment of intuition instead of our familiar process of reading? Should he, could he, enjoy friendships *there*, wanting the old smiling indications, the recognisable face, the sweet assurance of a look? And how did he know that a ghost would or could laugh, even at the very best of his jokes? He was not content to pass away like a weaver's shuttle. These metaphors of death made him all the more in love with life: all the more in love with this green earth, and the face of town and country, the pleasant voices and palpable touch of friends, and the 'sweet security' of streets. 'I do not want to be weaned by age,' he remarks, 'or drop like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.' Any alteration in his standing place discomposed and puzzled him.

My household gods plant a terrible fixed foot,
and are not rooted up without blood.

A new state of being staggers me.

I am a Christian, Englishman, *Templar*. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come.

I shall be like the 'crow on the sand,' as Wordsworth has it.

Doubtless that awful shadow which brooded over the house and heart of Charles Lamb — a shadow that chased him in 'all manner of sunshine' — made his nature shrink from the future, and nestle closer and closer to any firm bit of the tangible present. Such a sudden, appalling glimpse of the Eternal — a lightning flash, that left a lifelong darkness after it — must have vastly increased his natural dread of the unknown. Then to live for years and years in a state of listening suspense, always apprehensive of something terrible going to happen, haunted by some old echo of the past or foreboding of the future calamity, must have made his whole life perturbed and troubled; and so he clung to the old place and the old friends, old books and old faces, with all the tendrils of his nature growing about them, until they seemed to become a part, and the better part, of his life. Not that he dwelt on the subject dolefully, or sought to make life look dismal, or death dreadful for others. On the contrary, he made merry with his own frailties, and turned the morbidity of his temperament into healthy humour for us; edged that grim cloud of his life with the most exquisite freaks of playful light. Some queer twist in his head, he explained, prevented his facing the prospective, and looking forward to it as the place of home and friends.

This feeling of Lamb's had nothing to do with matters of conscience. With Wordsworth we can say of him,

Oh, he was good, if ever good man lived.

He was a Christian — a Christian of the simple child-like faith that we may believe our Father so much loves. He had the charity of a Christian, lived the life of a Christian, and we cannot doubt that he died the death of a Christian. Dr. Johnson, as we all know, had a still gloomier feeling about death; a constant dread of it, with no such relief as Lamb found in the mercifulities of his temperament.

Lamb was a small spare man, with a fine Titian head, full of dumb eloquence, as Hazlitt described it, and limbs very fragile to sustain it. A pair of *immaterial legs* Hood called them! His hair was almost black, his complexion dark, his look grave, his smile inexpressibly sweet, with a touch of sadness in it; one of the kindest that ever brightened a manly countenance. His face was full of lines, in which might be

read strange writing; nor was it wanting in those puckers and corners where the quips and cranks and wreathed smiles loved to lurk. The brow was earnest, and the eyes looked out earnestly, at times with a fiery gleam. They were restless, and glittered as if sharp enough to pick up pins and needles—so quick in turning. ‘It was no common face,’ says Hood, ‘none of those *wil-low pattern* ones which Nature turns out by thousands at her potteries; but more like a chance specimen of the Chinese ware—one to the set, unique, antique, quaint. (“Including the crack,” Lamb would have said.) You might have sworn to it piece-meal, a separate affidavit for each feature.’ Lamb has touched the main features of his own life and character in a brief and humorous sketch :

Charles, born in the Inner Temple, February 10th, 1775; pensioned off, 1825, after thirty-three years’ service; is now a gentleman at large; can remember few specialities in his life, except that he once caught a swallow flying (*teste suā manū*); below the middle stature; . . . stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism or a poor quibble, than in set or edifying speeches : has, consequently, been libelled with aiming at wit, which is, at least, as good as aiming at dulness. A small eater, but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper berry; was a great smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then a casual puff.

His true works are in Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios.

Of his other works he says :

Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things; villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been his, if they had been other than such; and better it is that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness than to affect a naturalness (so-called) that should be strange to him.

Lamb has likewise left us plenty of hints scattered up and down his works, for us to put together, and make him out with tolerable completeness.

The truth is, he says, he gave himself too little concern about what he uttered, and in whose presence. It was hit or miss with him. He had not the reticence of that wise man who, seeing some one coming in the midst of some refreshing fun, said, ‘Here comes a fool; let us be grace!’ He remarks that he too much affected that dangerous figure

—irony. ‘He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain unequivocal hatred.’ Not that any one ever really hated Lamb, any more than he could hate others.

Of course, there were persons who did not understand him; he nonplussed them so. He was not like anybody whom they knew; never saw such a man in their lives! For example, there is no doubt that he puzzled that respectable officer of the stamp department, who said to him, ‘Mr. Lamb, don’t you think Milton was a very clever man?’ Whereupon Lamb, taking up a candlestick, commenced capering round him with wild delight, singing —

Hey diddle dumpling, my son John
Went to bed with his breeches on,

and requested that he might be allowed to examine the gentleman’s head phrenologically. A better nature never breathed, and no man was ever more beloved. Why, he sat for a whole series of the British Admirals to oblige a friend, and save the cost of a model. On another occasion he took charge of a school to oblige the schoolmaster, and then, carrying his good-nature still farther, gave all the boys a holiday! He once saw a crowd of hungry children with their wistful faces at a pastry-cook’s window, and went in and supplied them with cakes all round. He wanted to help a friend of his, and hardly knew how to do it delicately enough. So first it took the shape of a bequest; then he said, ‘You may just as well have it beforehand, you know, and have done with the thing.’

Barry Cornwall also relates how Lamb saw him looking dull, and fancying he might be in want of money, said to him, ‘My dear boy—I have a quantity of useless things—I have now, in my desk, a—hundred pounds that I—I don’t know what to do with. Take it.’

No kindlier human soul ever looked through human eyes; the dewy light of pity all a-twinkle with humour. Unless we go back to the fountain-head, we shall hardly find elsewhere, save in Shakespeare’s writings, such tenderness of Christian charity as Lamb had. He does not sit down to plead the cause of the poor. He never sets up as a preacher of Christianity: never lectures us on our duties. His Christianity has not encrusted round him in any formal outside way. He had the spirit of it within him, and it breathes through his work in the most natural manner, and goes forth in loving effluence to melt its way into other hearts. Nor shall we find out of Shakespeare, I

think, such a cordial, exquisite humour mixed and perfected with such a heart-touching sense of things human. His humour is not a thing apart to be held up and admired as a special splendid quality ; it did not exist to that end. It is so blended with his quaint humanity and sweetness of character. It is just the smile of Christianity. But that smile was made up of sad experience, and heartache, and gentleness, and great love. The salt of his sayings had in it a taste of tears. He often had to ‘ coin his heart for jests,’ and, Ophelia-like, turn the terrors and frowns of calamity to ‘ favour and to prettiness.’ This makes his humour so full of heart, so sincere.

There may have been persons, I repeat, that Lamb could not ‘ cordialise’ with. He tells us that he was a bundle of prejudices, made up of likings and dislikings ; the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, and antipathies. He could not like all people alike. He was trying the greater part of life to like Scotchmen, and had to give up in despair. On the other hand, Scotchmen did not like him, and not one of them ever tried to. ‘ We know each other,’ says Lamb, ‘ at first sight ! ’ He belonged to an order of imperfect intellects which is essentially anti-Caledonian. His mind was rather suggestive than comprehensive ; — he could enjoy the profile view of a truth, and did not always seek to get it ‘ full face.’ He loved out-of-the-way humours, and heads with some diverting twist in them. He threw out hints, caught passing glimpses of things, and sowed germs of thought, but had not a maturing mind. The brain of the Scotchman, he says, is constituted on quite a different plan. ‘ You never catch his mind in undress. You never see his ideas in growth — if, indeed, they ever grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. He never hints or suggests. You cannot cry “ halves ” to anything he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at meridian ; you never see the first of dawn, the early streak. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no borderland with him. You cannot hover with him on the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him, for he sets you right. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy’s country.’ Minds of this class, and they are not confined to Scotland, were not calculated to do justice to the humours of Lamb. In

presence of this kind of character, he delighted to caper round with the candlestick in his hand, and give full scope to his piquant peculiarities. He liked to catch up some stolid lump of solemn foolishness or impassible common sense, and whirl it off its feet in the maddest, merriest maze and dance of contradiction. ‘ You are a matter-of-fact man,’ says he. ‘ Now I’m a matter-of-fic man : ‘tis odd if we two can’t make some fun ;’ and away he went. With such his wit became a Will-o’-the-wisp, leading into all sorts of unsafe places. ‘ Truth,’ he held, ‘ was precious ; not to be wasted on everybody ! ’ Not that there was any malice in his mirth. Nor was he a lover of quips and cranks, merely as such. He did not seek for funny matter on purpose to turn it out in a freakish manner. He did not affect quaintness ; it was natural to him. He did not hunt after paradoxes ; he was a paradox. He tells us that he could not divest himself of an unseasonable disposition to levity upon the most awful occasions. Anything awful made him laugh. He was at Hazlitt’s marriage, and says he had like to have been turned out during the ceremony. So strangely did some things strike and ricochet on his nonsensory. This was the touch of madness in his temperament which I have termed a mental St. Vitus’s dance. His sister Mary had it likewise, and in her abormal moods would at times pour out puns in the wildest profusion.

It gave a ‘sparkle of uneasy light’ to his eye, a spasmodic suddenness to his humour. Then, humour is often the sad and suffering man’s make-believe. He seems to say, ‘ Let us have a good hearty laugh. I do so want to cry.’ It was so with Hood. We often feel the heart-ache in his laughter and could say with Lear’s fool, ‘ Cry to it, nuncle ! ’ So was it with Lamb, although there was not so much hysteria in his feeling as in Hood’s. But what wisdom there is in his whimsies ! his wit is often sense brought to the finest point. How his most erratic movements and far-fetched expressions strike home ! His mind has a lightning-like zig-zag which is its straight line of smiting. It was not that Lamb could not take the common view of things and appraise facts the ordinary way. His perfect acquaintance with their every-day features is implied in his extraordinary treatment of them. He can see straight enough for all the apparent obliquity of vision. We know where the beaten highway runs when he chooses to go across the fields and meet you unexpectedly. But he had a natural tendency to

look at the *other side* of things, and remember their forgotten aspects and set them forth in a ludicrous or pathetic light,—or rather in the cross lights of both humour and pathos. It was an illustration of his character, that he should, when a child, have given his sympathy to the man in the parable who built his house on the sand, not to him who built on the rock. Then, with regard to the parable of the ten virgins, the sympathies of most readers run rejoicingly alongside the five wise ones whose lamps were ready trimmed and who tripped off so happily at the sound of the Bridegroom's voice. Lamb's would have remained with the five foolish ones, trying to rouse them out of their stupor, rubbing the sleep out of their eyes, seeking to get a little oil for them, hurrying them along 'like good girls,' and pleading for them at the gate, stammering out all sorts of excuses for their delay. This is the source of much of his humour; his way of looking at the other side of things. When a boy he was walking one day with Mary in a churchyard, and he noticed that all the tombstones were inscribed with words of praise for the departed. 'Mary,' said he, 'where do all the naughty people lie?' Even so he has a word of humorous compassion for the man who was taken prisoner for sheep-stealing and his sheep was taken too! Thus, as Lamb said, the poor fellow lost 'his first, last, and only hope of a mutton pie.' This characteristic of Lamb's mind climaxed in a horrible thought when he suggested the possibility that after Clarence had chosen his favourite liquor to be drowned in and he was shut down, past help, and filling fast, it may not have been Malmsey after all!

What Wordsworth was to the wayside common places, the weeds and wild flowers, rocks, and hedgerows of the external world, that was Lamb in prose to the kindred common things of humanity. He was the Good Samaritan of all sorts of road-side subjects that had been hitherto passed by in disdain as too mean for literature. Neglected objects made all the more pathetic appeal to him and he sealed them for his own. He loved to stop and administer the quaintest comfort to the comfortless, or with fancy 'archly bending' moralise on most familiar things. He made much of that which had been made so little of before. His attraction for and attention to all that was unpretentious almost amounted to a foible, although it was the natural reaction of his dislike to all that was pretentious. But if his subjects be poor there is nothing sordid in his treatment. Poverty looks rich

when clothed by his gentle loving spirit. Here there is nothing of the solemn, priest-like severity of Wordsworth; nothing of the stern squalor of Crabbe. The dim and dirt-begrimed image is transfigured by an overflow of this kindest human soul. No lost heir was ever recovered from the chimney-sweeper's clutches and stripped of his dark disguise with more loving tendance or peculiar care than that with which Lamb brings in his outsider of humanity, his foundling, and touches the poor dim face so tenderly with a dropping tear and then lights it up suddenly with a smile of his humour, till the common human features are seen and the lost likeness is recognised. Then, the raiment for which the old rags are exchanged. How precise and dainty it is! Slightly old-fashioned of course, for it has been kept some time, laid up in lavender as it were. He turns out his new-found favourites with a touch of modest gentility and antique grace, and introduces them to us with an air at once fine and formal. His beggar, his chimney-sweeper is at heart a gentleman, for they come from a gentle heart. Whatsoever common-place or outcast subject he may be at work on, he touches that nature which lies at the root of all gentlehood. And so artistic and sure is his touch that he appears to feature and finish common clay with the delicate sharpness of marble. Yet so human is his spirit that he seems to lay on endearment after endearment, caress after caress, so that the result looks more like a simple growth of Nature than a complex work of Art; a live child rather than the statue of one. If his material be common-place, his handling is quite uncommon.

The most minute poring of personal affection cannot discover anything very precious in Lamb's poetry. He was not a poet, but a humorist. He could not have been meant by nature for a poet. She had not given him a musical soul. He did not care to wander and muse alone; had not the poet habit. We are told that he would rather be in a crowd of people whom he disliked, than be left by himself. Mental haze and twilight he shunned because of the terrible shadows that might take living shape. His gleams of poetry are almost inseparable from the twinkle of his humour, and when he wrote his verses he had not got into that vein of incomparable humour which afterwards yielded such riches to his essays and letters.

Some lines written a year after his mother's death have a keener thrill and a more searching accent than usual. He thankfully

feels the 'sweet resignedness of hope drawn heavenward' on the ebbing tide of their great affliction, and rejoices over one of Mary's recoveries.

Thou didst not keep
Her soul in death. O keep not now, my Lord,
Thy servants in far worse — in spiritual death
And darkness, blacker than those feared shad-
ows
O' the valley all must tread. Lend us Thy
balms,
Thou dear Physician of the sin-sick soul,
And heal our cleanséd bosoms of the wounds
With which the world hath pierced us thro'
and thro'
Give us new flesh, new birth.

There are few things in poetry more pathetic than this :

Thou and I, dear friend,
With filial recognition sweet, shall know
One day the face of our dear mother in heaven ;
And her remembered looks of love shall greet,
With answering looks of love; her placid
smiles
Meet with a smile as placid ; and her hand
With drops of fondness wet, nor fear repulse.

His criticisms are generally as perfect as they are brief. They are only glances at the subject, yet they go to the heart of the matter. They are all essence of criticism, and a sentence often contains more than many a long and elaborate review. But it is in his essays and letters that he lives most fully and comes home most closely to the business and bosoms of men.

Charles Lamb was no teacher of his time, and had no commanding or immediate influence on his contemporaries. He lifted up no banner, summoned no contending hosts to the conflict, did no battle on the side of faction or party, and was possessed of no vast intellectual powers. But this he *was* — one of the most affectionate, most lovable, most piquantly imperfect of dear, good fellows that ever won their way into the human heart, and one of the most hearty, most English, most curiously felicitous humourists — emphatically one of the *best* — that ever lived. He has left us in his works a perennial source of refining pleasure, full of freshness and moral health, and kindly communicative warmth, over which countless readers will bend with smiling face or moistened eye ; and the sad will feel a solace, the weary gather heart's-ease, the cold and narrow of nature may warm them and expand in the generous glow to be found in the writings of Charles Lamb. And this he *did* : — He threw his life in

with that of his sister, for her to share the best of both. He took her hand and drew her to his side, and made his abode in the same desert with her, where they dwelt together in 'double singleness.' He chose to stand with her straight under the black cloud always suspended over them, always threatening danger and possible death, on purpose to be near her and administer unto her such a cup of comfort as could be filled for her by a brother's love. For many long and troubled years he kept his proud resolve and bore his burden contentedly, fought his battle nobly, carried his shield in front of his sister, and smiled in her face sweetly, while his own heart often ached so bitterly. He triumphed in his tragic conflict with an adverse fate, and in his life he has left us one of the noblest illustrations of our English sense of duty ; a beacon that will long shine through the night of time with a still and holy light, a look of lofty cheer, and kindle encouragement in the lives of many others who have to suffer long and journey desolately, and climb the hill Difficulty with more at heart than they can well bear. And surely we may conclude with and rest in the pleasant thought that a sorely tried soul like this of Lamb's can now look back over the past life with its sordid cares and clouds of confusion, its failures and defects, its slips of the foot in climbing, and *feel what we can now see* : that is, the *clear victorious result of all*, and calmly smile at all that's past from some unclouded summit.

GERALD MASSEY.

"FANNY FERN'S FIRST LITERARY SUCCESS." — "Fifteen or sixteen years ago, 'Artemas Ward,' 'Mrs. Partington,' and 'Miles O'Reilly' were labouring together in one office, each in his degree, working on the *Carpet Bag*, a not very comic paper, which was then trying hard to live, and was published in Boston. We may be mistaken, but we think 'Fanny Fern' was first successful in the columns of the same journal." — *The Nation*. To the foregoing, "Fanny" replies in the *Nation* as follows : — "Sir : Fanny Fern's first article was written for a one-horse religious magazine in Boston, called the *Mother's Assistant*, or some such name. The remuneration for that article was *fifty cents*, and the writer went up four pair of stairs five times to the office of the editor to get it, beside being put through this catechism : — "Widow, eh ? See you have on black ! Children ? How many ? Girls or boys ?'"

CHAPTER VII.— JOCK HALL'S JOURNEY.

JOHN SPENCE, who, as we have seen, was connected with the early history of Adam Mercer, had now reached an extreme old age, somewhere between eighty and ninety years. As he himself for a considerable time had stuck to the ambiguous epoch of "aboon fourscore," it was concluded, by his friends, that his ninth decade had nearly ended. He was hale and hearty, however — "in possession of all his faculties," as we may say — with no complaint but "the rheumatics," which had soldered his joints so as to keep him generally a prisoner in the large chair "ayont the fire," or to compel him to use crutches when he "hirpled" across the floor; or, as was his delight in genial weather, to occupy the bench at his cottage door, there to fondle the young dogs and cultivate his acquaintance with the old ones. He had of course long ago given up all active work, and was a pensioner on his Lordship; but he still tenaciously clung to the title of "Senior Keeper." The vermin even which he had killed, and nailed, as a warning to evil-doers, over the gable-ends and walls of outhouses, had, with the exception of a few fragments of bleached fossils, long since passed away, giving place to later remains.

John was a great favourite with his master; and his advice was always asked in all matters connected with the game on the estate of Castle Bennock. His anecdotes and reminiscences of old sporting days which he had spent with three generations of the family, and with generations of their friends and relations, were inexhaustible. And when the great annual festival of "the 12th" came round and the Castle was crowded, and the very dogs seemed to snuff the game in the air and become excited, then John's cottage, with its kennels and all its belongings, became a constant scene of attraction to the sportsmen; and there he held a sort of court, with the dignity and gravity of an old Nimrod.

The cottage was beautifully situated in a retired nook at the entrance of a glen, beside a fresh mountain stream, and surrounded by a scattered wood of wild birches, mountain ash, and alder. The first ridge of Benturk rose beyond the tree tops, with an almost clean sweep of loose stones, ribbed by wintry floods, and dotted by tufts of heather and bits of emerald-green pasture, up to the range of rocks which ramparted the higher peaks, around which in every direction faded away the endless moorland of hill and glen.

John had long been a widower, and now resided with his eldest son Hugh, whose hair was already sprinkled with white, as brown heather with streaks of snow.

Although the distance which separated John Spence from Adam Mercer was only about thirty miles, there had been little intercourse between the cousins. A ridge of hills and a wild district intervened, without any direct communication. The mail-coach which passed through Drumsylie did not come within miles of Castle Bennock. Letters were rare between them, and were very expensive at that time to all but M.P.'s, who could frank them for themselves or their friends. And so it was that while John and Adam occasionally heard of each other, and exchanged messages by mutual friends, or even met after intervals of years, they nevertheless lived as in different lands.

It was late on the Tuesday after his flight that Jock Hall, for reasons known only to himself, entered the cottage of John Spence and walked up to the blazing fire, beside which the old keeper was seated alone.

"Wat day, Mr. Spence!" said Jock, as his clothes began to smoke almost as violently as the fire which shone on his wet and tattered garments.

John Spence was evidently astonished by the sudden appearance and blunt familiarity of a total stranger, whose miserable and woe-begone condition was by no means prepossessing. Keeping his eye on him, John slowly drew a crutch between his knees, as if anxious to be assured of present help.

"Wha the mis-chief are ye?" asked Spence in an angry voice.

"A frien', Mr. Spence — a frien'! But let me heat mysel' awee — for I hae travelled far through moss and mire, and sleepit last nicht in a roofless biggin', an' a' to see you — and syne I'll gie ye my cracks."

Spence, more puzzled than ever, only gave a growl, and said, "A frien' in need is doot a frien' indeed, and I suppose ye'll be nae frien' in need, and ye tak' me for the frien' indeed, but maybe ye're mistaen!"

Hall being longer silent than was agreeable, Spence at last said impatiently, "Nane o' yer nonsense wi' me! I'll ca' in the keepers. Ye're ane o' thae beggin' ne'er-do-well tramps that we hae ower mony o'. Gang to the door and cry loud for Hugh. He's up in the plantin'; the guid-wife and bairns are doon at the Castle. Be quick, or be aff on yer business."

Jock very coolly replied, "My business

is wi' you, an' I'm glad I hae gotten ye by yersel' an' naebody near. I'll no ca' Hugh an' I ken ye canna do't. Sae I'll just wait till he comes, and tell ye my business in the meantime. Wi' your leave, Mr. Spence, I'll tak' a seat ;" on which he drew a chair to the side of the fire opposite old John, who, partly from fear and partly from a sense of his own weakness, and also from curiosity, said nothing, but watched Hall with a look of childish astonishment, his under lip hanging helplessly down, and his hand firmly grasping the crutch. His only remark was — "My certes, ye're a cool ane ! I hae seen the day" — but what he had seen vanished in another growl, ended by a groan.

"Tak' a snuff, Mr. Spence," said Hall, as he rose and offered his tin box to the keeper. "Snuff is meat and music ; it's better than a bite o' bread when hungry, and maist as gude as a dram when cauld, and at a' times it is pleasant tae sowl and body. Dinna spare !"

There was not, as usual, much to spare of the luxury, but Spence refused it on the ground that he had never snuffed, and "didna like to get a habit o't."

"I think," said Jock, "ye might trust yersel' at fourscore for no doing that."

The keeper made no reply, but kept his small grey eyes under his bushy eyebrows fixed on his strange visitor.

When Jock had resumed his seat he said, "Ye'll ken weel, I'se warrant, Mr. Spence, a' the best shootin' grun' about Benturk ? Ye'll nae doot ken the best bits for fillin' yer bag when the win' is east or wast, north or south ? And ye'll ken the Lang Slap ? and the Craigdarroch brae ? and the short cut by the peat moss, past the Big Stane, and doon by the whins to the Cairntupple muir ? And ye'll ken" —

Old Spence could stand this no longer, and he interrupted Jock by exclaiming, "Confoond yer gab and yer impudence ! dauring to sit afore me there as if ye were maister and I servant ! What do ye mean ?"

"I was but axin a ceevil question, Mr. Spence ; and I suppose ye'll no deny that ye ken thae places ?"

"An' what if I do ? what if I do ?" retorted the keeper.

"Jist this," said Jock, without a movement in the muscles of his countenance, "that I ken them tae for mony a year ; and sae baith o' us hae common frien's amang the hills."

"What do ye ken aboot them ?" asked Spence, not less pacified, nor less puzzled.

"Because," said Jock, "I hae shot ower them a' as a poacher — my name is Jock Hall, parish o' Drumsylie — and I hae had the best sport on them ever" —

But this was too much. With an exclamation that need not be recorded, Spence made an attempt to rise with the help of his crutches, but was gently laid back in his chair by Jock, who said —

"Muckle ye'll mak o't ! as the auld wife said to the guse wammelin in the glaur. Sit doon — sit doon, Mr. Spence," as he quietly helped him back to his chair. "I'll be as guid to you as Hugh ; and I'll ca' in Hugh ony time ye like : sae be easy. For I wish awteen oursels to tell ye aboot an auld poacher and an auld acquaintance o' yours and mine, Sergeant Adam Mercer ; for it's aboot him I've come." This announcement induced John to resume his seat without further trouble, on which Jock said, "Noo I'll ca' Hugh to ye, gin ye bid me, as ye seem feared for me ;" and he motioned as if to go to the door.

"I'm no feared for you nor for mortal man !" replied Spence, asserting his dignity in spite of his fears ; "but, my fac' ! ye might be feared pittin' yer fit into a trap like this ! and if Hugh grips ye !" — He left the rest to be inferred.

"Pfuff !" said Jock. "As to that, man, I hae been in every jail roon' aboot ! A jail wad be comfort compared wi' the road I hae travelled and the hole I been sleepin' in sin' I left Drumsylie ! But wull ye no hear me aboot Adam Mercer ?"

Spence could not comprehend the character he had to deal with, but beginning to think him probably "a natural," he told him to "say awa'."

Jock now gathered all his wits about him, so as to be able to give a long and tolerably lucid history of the events which were then agitating the little world of Drumsylie, and of which the Sergeant was the centre. He particularly described the part that Mr. Smellie had taken in the affair, and, perhaps, from more than one grudge he bore to the said gentleman, he made him the chief, if not the only real enemy of the Sergeant.

The only point which Jock failed to make intelligible to the keeper was his account of the Starling. It may have been the confusion of ideas incident to old age when dealing with subjects which do not link themselves to the past, or it may have been something else ; but so it was that there got jumbled up in the keeper's mind such a number of things connected with a bird which was the bairn of the Sergeant's

bairn, which whistled songs, and told Jock he was a man, and disturbed the peace of the parish, and broke the Sabbath, and deposed the Sergeant, that he could not solve the mystery for himself, nor could Jock make it clearer. He therefore accepted of Spence's confusion as the natural result of a true estimate of the facts of the case, and accordingly declared that "the bird was a kin' o' witch, a maist extraordinar' eratur, that seemed to ken a' things, and unless he was mistaen wad pit a' things richt gin the hinner en'. The keeper declared "his detestation o' a' speakin birds;" and his opinion that "birds were made for shootin', or for ha'en their necks thrawn — unless when layin' or hatchin'."

But what practical object, it may be asked, had Hall in view in this volunteer mission of his? It was to get Spence to ask his Lordship, as being the greatest man in the district, to interfere in the matter, and thus by all possible means to get Smellie, if not Mr. Porteous, muzzled.

Jock had, however, touched a far sorer point than he was aware of when he described Smellie as the propagator of the early history of the Sergeant as a poacher. This, along with all that had been narrated, so roused the indignation of Spence, who had the warmest regard for the Sergeant apart from his being his cousin, and from the fact of his having connived in some degree at his poaching, that, forgetting for a moment the polluted presence of a confessed poacher like Hall, he told him to call Hugh; but added, "What wull ye do if he kens what ye are, my man? It's easy to get oot o' the teeth o' an auld dog like me, wha's a guid bit aboon fourscore. But Hugh! — certes he wad pit baith o' us ower his head! What *wad* he say if he kent a poacher was sitting at his fireside?"

"I didna say, Mr. Spence, that I *am* a poacher, but that I *was* ane; nor did I say that I wad be ane again; nor could Hugh or ony ane else pruve mair than has been pruved a ready against me, and paid for by sowl and body to jails and judges: sae let that flee stick to the wa'!" answered Jock; and having done so, he went to the door and, with stentorian lungs, called the younger keeper in a voice which waked up all the dogs to howl and bark as if they had been aware of the poaching habits of the shouter.

As Hugh came to the door, at which Jock calmly stood, he said to him in a careless tone, as if he had known him all his life: "Yer faither wants ye," and, entering

the kitchen, he resumed his former seat, folding his arms and looking at the fire

"Wha the sorrow hae ye got here, faither, cheek by jowl wi' ye?" asked the tall and powerful keeper, scanning Jock with a most critical eye.

"A frien' o' my cousin's, Adam Mercer," replied old Spence. "But speer ye nae quastions, Hugh, and ye'll get nae lees. He has come on business that I'll tell ye aboot. But tak' him ben in the meantime, and gie him some bread and cheese, y' a drap milk, till his supper's ready. He'll stay here till morning. Mak' a bed ready for him in the laft."

Hugh, in the absence of his wife, obeyed his father's orders, though not without rather a strong feeling of lessened dignity as a keeper in being thus made the servant of a ragged-looking tramp. While Jock partook of his meal in private, and afterwards went out to smoke his pipe and look about him, old Spence entered into earnest conference with his son Hugh. After giving his rather confused and muddled, yet sufficiently correct, edition of Mercer's story, he concentrated his whole attention and that of his son on the fact that Peter Smellie was the enemy of Adam Mercer, and had been so for some time; that he had joined the minister to persecute him; and, among other things, had also revealed the story of Adam's poaching more than thirty years before, to raise prejudice against his character and that of Spence as a keeper.

"Wha's Smellie? I dinna mind him!" asked Hugh.

"Nae loss, Hugh! — nae loss at a'. I never spak' o't to onybody afore, and ye'll no clipe aboot it, for every dog should hae his chance; and if a man should miss wi' ae barrel, he may nevertheless hit wi' the tither; and I dinna want to fash the man mair than is necessar'. But this same Smellie had a shop here at the clachan aboon twenty years syne, and I got him mony a job to do — for he was then in the grocer line — aboot the Castle; an' didna the rogue

— Is the door steekit?" asked the old man in a whisper. Hugh nodded. "An' didna the rogue," continued old John, "forge my name tae a bill for 50/-! That did he; and I could hae hanged him! But I never telt on him till this hour, but made him pay the half o't, and I paid the ither half mysel'; and Adam see'd me sae distressed for the money that he gied me 5/- to help. Naebody kent o't excep' mysel' and Adam, wha was on a veesit to me at the time, and saw it was a forgery; and I axed him *never*

to say a word aboot it, and I'll wager he never did, for a clean-speerited man and honourable is the Sergeant ! Weel, Smellie by my advice left the kintra-side for Drumsylie, and noo he's turning against Adam ! Isna that awfu' ? Is't no deevilish ? Him like a doug pointing at Adam ! As weel a moose point at a gled !

" That's a particular bonnie job indeed," said Hugh. " I wad like to pepper the sneaky chiel wi' snipe-dust for't. But what can be dune noo ? "

" Dune ! Mair than Smellie wad like, and eneuch to mak him lowse his grip o' Adam !" said the old man. " I hae a letter bamboozlin' my head, and I'll maybe grip it in the mornin' afore breakfast-time ! Be ye ready to write it doon as I tell ye, and it'll start Smellie ower his calico and braid clath, or I'm mistaen ! "

Hugh was ordered to meet his father in the morning, to indite the intended epistle.

As the evening drew on, the family who occupied the keeper's house were gathered together like crows flying to their rookery. Mrs. Hugh, who had been helping at a large washing in " the big house," returned with a blythe face, full of cheer and womanly kindness.

" Hech ! but I hae had sic a day o't ! What a washing ! an' it's no half dune ! But wha hae we here ? " she asked, as she espied Jock seated near the fire. " Dae I ken ye ? " she further inquired, looking at him with a sceptical smile, as if she feared to appear rude to one whom she ought, perhaps, to have recognised.

Jock, with a sense of respect due to her, rose, and said, " I houp no, for maybe I wad be nae credit to ye as an acquaintance."

" A frien' o' my cousin's, Adam Mercer o' Drumsylie. Sit doon, my man," remarked old Spence.

" I'm glad to see ye," said the happy *sonsy* wife, stretching out her hand to Jock, who took it reluctantly, and gazed in the woman's face with an awkward expression.

" It's been soft weather, and bad for travellin', and ye hae come a far gait," she continued ; and forthwith began to arrange her house. Almost at her heels the children arrived. There were two flaxen-haired girls, one ten and the other near twelve, with bare feet, and their locks tied up like sheaves of ripe golden grain. Then came a stout lad of about seven, from school and play. All looked as fresh and full of life as young deer from the forest.

" Gang awa, bairns, and snod yersels," said Mrs. Hugh.

" This man," said old Spence, who was jealous of his authority over the houshould, pointing to Jock, " wull tak' his supper wi' us. He's to sleep in the stable-laft."

" He's welcome, he's welcome," said Mrs. Hugh. " The bed is no braw, but it's clean, and it's our best for strangers."

The last to enter, as the sun was setting, was John, the eldest, a lad of about fourteen, the very picture of a pure-eyed, ruddy-complexioned, healthy, and happy lad. He had left school to assist his father in attending to his duties.

" What luck, Johnnie ? " asked his father as the boy entered with his fishing basket over his shoulder.

" Middling only," replied John, " the water was rather low, and the tak' wasna guid. There were plenty o' rises, but they were unco shy. But I hae gotten, for a' that, a wheen for breakfast ; " and he unslung his basket and poured out from it a number of fine trout.

Jock's attention was now excited. Here was evidence of an art which he flattered himself he understood and could speak about.

" Pretty fair," was his remark, as he rose and examined them ; " whaur got ye them ? "

" In the Blackcraig water," the boy replied.

" Let me luik at yer flee, laddie ? " asked Jock. The boy produced it. " Broon heckle — bad ! — ye should hae tried a teal's feather on a day like this."

Johnnie looked with respect at the stranger. " Are ye a fisher ? " he asked.

" I hae tried my han'," said Jock. And so the conversation began, until soon the two were seated together at the window. Then followed such a talk on the mysteries of the craft as none but students of the angle could understand : — the arrangement and effect of various " dressings," of wings, bodies, heckles, &c., being discussed with intense interest, until all felt they had in Jock a master.

" Ye seem to understan' the business weel," remarked Hugh.

" I wad need," replied Jock. " When a man's life, no to speak o' his pleasure, depen's on't, he needs to fish wi' a watchfu' ee and canny han'. But at a' times, toom or hungry, it's a great diverteesement ! "

Both Johnnie and his father cordially assented to the truth of the sentiment.

" Eh, man ! what a conceit it is when ye reach a fine run on a warm spring mornin', the wuds hotchin' wi' birds, an' dauds o' light noos and thans glintin' on the water ;

an' the water itsel' in trim order, a wee doon, after a nicht's spate, and wi' a drap o' porter in't, an' rowin' and bubblin' ower the big stanes, curlin' into the linn and oot o't; and you up tae the henchies in a dark neuk whaur the fish canna see ye; an' than to get a lang cast in the breeze that souchs in the bushes, an' see yer flee licht in the verra place ye want, quiet as a midge lichts on yer nose, or a bumbee on a flower o' clover, an'" —

Johnnie was bursting with almost as much excitement as Jock, but, did not interrupt him except with a laugh expressive of his delight.

"An' then," continued Jock, "whan a muckle chiel o' a salmon, wi' oot time to consider whether yer flee is for his wame or only for his mouth — whether its made by natur' or by Jock Hall, — plays flap! and by mistak' gangs to digest what he has gotten for his breakfast, but canna swallow the line alang wi' his mornin' meal till he takis some exercise! — an' then to see the line ticht, and the rod bendin' like a heuk, and tae fin' something gaun frae the fish up the line and rod till it reaches yer verra heart that thumps *pit pat*, at yer throat, in spite o' you; until the bonnie cratur', after rinning up and down like mad, skulkin' beside a stane to cure his teethache, and trying every dodge, at last gies in, comes to yer han' beat in fair play, and lies on the shore sayin' 'Waes me' wi' his tail, an' makin' his will wi' his gills and mouth time aboot! — eh, man! it's splendid!" Jock wearied himself with the description.

"Whaur hae ye fished?" asked Hugh, after a pause in which he had evidently enjoyed Jock's description.

"In the wast water and east water; in the big linn and wee linn, in the Loch o' the Whinns, in the Red Burn, an' in" —

"I dinna ken thae waters at a'," remarked the keeper, interrupting him, "nor ever heard o' them!"

"Nor me," chimed in old John, "thoong I hae been here for mair than fifty years."

"Maybe no," said Jock with a laugh, "for they're in the back o' the beyonts, and that's a place few folk hae seen, I do assure you — ha! ha! ha!" Jock had, in fact, fished the best streams watched by the keepers throughout the whole district. Young John was delighted with this new acquaintance, and looked up to him with the greatest reverence.

"What kin' o' flee do ye fish wi'?" asked Johnnie. "Hae ye ony aboot ye enoo?"

"I hae a few," said Hall, as he unbuttoned his waistcoat, displaying a tattered

shirt within. Then diving into some hidden recess near his heart, he drew forth a large old pocket-book and placed it on the table. He opened it with caution and circumspection, and spread out before the delighted Johnnie, and his no less interested father, entwined circles of gut, with flies innumerable. "That's the ane," Jock would say, holding up a small, black, hairy thing. "I killed ten dizzen wi' — thumpers tae, three pun's some o' them — afore twa o'clock. Eh, man, he's a murderin' chiel this!" exhibiting another. "But it was this ither ane," holding up one larger and more gaudy, "that nicked four salmon in three hours to their great surprise! And thaе flees," taking up other favourites, "wi' the muir fowl wing and black body, are guid killers; but isna this a cracker wi' the wee touch o' silver? it killt mair salmon — whaur, ye needna speer — than I could carry hame on a heather wuddie! But," he added after a pause, "I maun, as yer frien', warn ye that it's no the flee, nor the water, nor the rod, nor the win', nor the licht, can do the job wi'oot the watchfu' e'e and steady han'! I think I could maist catch fish in a boyne o' water if there were ony tae catch!"

While the preparations for supper were going on within doors, Jock went out to have a "dauner," or saunter, but, in truth, from a modest wish to appear as if not expecting to be asked to partake of supper with the family.

The table was spread with a white home-made linen cloth, and deep plates were put down, each with a horn spoon beside it.

A large pot, containing potatoes which had been pared, before they were placed on the fire, was now put on the floor, and a pound of fresh butter with some salt having been added to its contents, the whole was beat and mashed with a heavy wooden beetle worked by Hugh and his son — for the work required no small patience and labour — into a soft mass, forming an excellent dish of "champed potatoes," which, when served up with rich milk, was "a dainty dish to set before a king," even without the four-and-twenty blackbirds. Then followed a second course of "barley scones," and thick crisp oatmeal cakes, with fresh butter, cheese, and milk.

Before supper was served Jock Hall was missed, and Johnnie sent in search of him.

After repeated shouts he found him wandering about the woods, but he had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to join the family. Jock said "It wasna for him to gang ben," — "he had had eneuch in

the afternoon,"—“he wad hae a bite after hin,” &c. But he entered, and without speaking a word seated himself in the place allotted to him.

“Tak’ in your chair, Maister Hall,”—Jock could not believe his ears!—“and mak’ what supper ye can,” said Mrs. Hugh. “We’re plain kintra folk here awa’,”—an apology to Jock for their having nothing extra at supper to mark their respect for a friend of the Sergeant’s! What were Jock’s Hall’s thoughts? The character of an impostor seemed forced upon him when he most desired to be an honest man.

Then the old man reverently took off his “Kilmarnock cowl,” a coloured worsted night-cap, and said grace, thanking God for all his mercies, “of the least of which,” he added, “we are not worthy.” After supper Mrs. Hugh gave a long account of the labours of the day, and of the big washing, and told how she had met Lady Mary, and Lady Caroline, and Lord M —, and how they had been talking to the children, and been speering for father and grandfather.

A happy family was that assembled under the keeper’s roof. The youngest child, a boy, was ever welcome on old John’s knee, who never seemed able to exhaust the pleasure he derived from his grandson’s prattle. His large watch, which approached in size to a house clock, with its large pewter seal, was an endless source of amusement; so also was the splendid rabbit shadowed on the wall, with moving ears and moving mouth, created by John’s hands; and his imitation of dogs, cats, and all other domestic animals, in which he was an adept;—nay, his very crutches, were turned to account to please the boy, and much more to please his grandfather. The elder daughters clung round their mother in a group, frankly talking to her in mutual confidence and love. The boys enjoyed the same liberty with their father, and indulged unchecked in expressions of affection. All was freedom without rudeness, play without riot, because genuine heart-felt affection united all.

Jock did not join in the conversation, except when he was asked questions by Mrs. Hugh about Drumsylie, its shops and its people. On the whole he was shy and reserved. Any one who could have watched his eye and his heart would have seen both busy contemplating a picture of ordinary family life such as they had never beheld. But Jock still felt as if he was not in his right place—as if he were one who would have been cast out into the darkness had his

real character been known. His impressions were still more deepened when, before going to bed, the large Bible was placed on the table, and Hugh, amidst the silence of the family, said, “We’ll hae worship.” The chapter for the evening was the fifteenth of St. Luke. It was as if written for poor Hall, though not selected for his special benefit. Are such adaptations to human wants to be called chance? He who can feed the wild beasts of the desert, or the sparrow amidst the waste of wintry snows, can surely give food to the hungry soul of a Prodigal Son, who does not know the food he needs, nor the Father who can supply it.

They did not ask Jock if he would remain for evening worship. “The stranger within the gate” was assumed to be, for the time, a member of the household. It was for him to renounce his recognised right, not for the family either to doubt or deny it. But Jock never even argued the question with himself. He listened with head bent down, as if ashamed to hold it up, and following the example set to him, he knelt down—for the first time in his life—in prayer. Did he pray? Was it all a mere form? Was it by constraint, and not willingly? What his thoughts were on such an occasion, or whether they were gathered up in prayer to the living God, who can tell? But if the one thought even, for the first time, possessed him, that maybe there was a Person beyond the seen and temporal who belonged not to the world and man, but to whom both belonged, whose Name he could now associate with no evil but with all good, who possibly knew him and wished him to be good like Himself;—if there was even a glimmer in his soul, as he knelt down, that he might say “Our Father which art in Heaven,” then was there cast into his heart, though he knew it not, the germ of a new life which might grow into life eternal.

The prayer of Hugh the keeper was simple, earnest, and direct, a real utterance from one person to another—yet as from a man to God, couched in his own homely dialect to Him whom the people of every language and tongue worship. It grew naturally out of the chapter which he had just read. He acknowledged that all were as lost sheep; as money lost in the dust of earth; miserable prodigals lost to their Father and to themselves, and who were poor and needy, feeding on husks, having no satisfaction, and finding no man to give unto them. He prayed God to bring them all into the fold of the Good Shepherd,

who had given his life for the sheep, and to keep them in it; to gather them as the lost coins into the treasury of Him who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; to stir them all to say "I will arise, and go to my Father," in the firm hope that their Father would meet them afar off, and receive them with joy. After praying for the afflicted in body and mind, for the orphan and widow, the outcast and stranger, he prayed that God who had mercy on us who deserved nothing, would make us merciful to others; and then concluded with the Lord's Prayer.

Had any one seen poor Hall that night as he lay in the hay-loft, a clean blanket under him and more than one over him, they might have discovered in his open eyes, and heard in his half-muttered expressions, and noticed even from his wakeful tossings to and fro, a something stirring in his soul the value of which he himself could not fully estimate.

CHAPTER VIII.— JOCK HALL'S RETURN.

OLD John Spence was an early riser. He did not share Charles Lamb's fears of indulging the ambition of rising with the sun. The latter part of the day was to him a period of repose, a *siesta* of half-sleepy meditation, which not unfrequently passed into a deep-toned sleep in his arm-chair. In a lucid interval, during the evening of Jock's arrival, he had been considering how he might best help the Sergeant out of his difficulties. He had not for a moment accepted of Hall's policy suggesting his lordship's interference. With the instinct of an old servant, he felt that to be out of the question. So he had informed Jock, bidding him not to think of his lordship, but assuring him that he would see what could be done to muzzle Smellie. Having matured his plans, he was ready at daybreak to execute them, and accordingly embraced the first opportunity of taking Hugh into a small closet, where the little business which required writing was generally transacted, and where a venerable *escritoire* stood, in whose drawers and secret recesses were carefully deposited all papers relating to that department of his lordship's estate over which John was chief.

The door having been carefully shut and barred, the old keeper seated in an arm-chair, and his son Hugh at the *escritoire*, John said, "Get the pen and paper ready."

"A' richt," said Hugh, having mended his pen and tried it on his thumb-nail, look-

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ing at it carefully as he held it up in the light.

"Weel, then, begin! Write — 'Sir'; no 'Dear Sir,' but just 'Sir.' Of course ye'll pit the direction 'To Mr. Peter Smellie.' Eh? — halt a wee — should I say Mr. or plain Peter? Jist mak' it plain Peter — say, 'To Peter Smellie.'"

"To Peter Smellie," echoed Hugh.

"John Spence, keeper — or raither, John Spence, senior keeper — wishes to tell ye that ye are a scoondrill."

After writing these words with the exception of the last, Hugh said, "Be canny, faither, or maybe he might prosecute you."

"Let him try't!" replied John; "but let scoondrill stan'. It's the verra pooder and shot o' my letter; wi'oot that, it's a' tow and colfin."

"I'm no sure, faither, if I can spell't," said Hugh, who did not like the rather doubtful expression, and put off the writing of it by asking, "Hoo, faither, d'ye spell *scoonreel*?"

"What iither way than the auld way?"

"But I never wrote it afore, for I hae had little to do wi' ony o' the squad."

"Weel, I wad say — s, k, oo, oo, n, d, r, i, l, l, or to that effec'. Keep in the *drill* whatever ye do, for that's what I mean to gie him!"

Having written this very decided introduction, Hugh went on with his letter, which when completed ran as follows:—

"John Spence, Senior Keeper, Castle Bennoch, to Peter Smellie, Draper, Drumsylie.

"You are a skoondrill, and you kno it! But nobody else knos it but my son and me and Serjent Mercer. I wuss you to understan that he knos all about you black business o' yours, 20 year back. This comes to let you kno that unless you leve him alone, and don't molest him, I will send you to Botany Bay, as you deserve. Medle not with the Sergeant, or it wull be to your cost. Attend to this hint. I wull have you weel watched. You are in Mr. Mercer's power. Bewar!

"Your servt.

"JOHN SPENCE."

"I houp," said John, as he had the letter read over to him, "that will mak' the whitrat leave aff sookan the Sergeant's throat! If no, I'll hunt him like a fox oot o' the kintra side. But no' a word o' this, mind ye, to ony leeven cratur, mair especial to yon trampin' chiel. Gie Smellie a chance. Sae let the letter be sent aff the nicht wi' Sandy the Post. The sooner the better. The nesty taed! Him to be preaching to Adam oot o' his clay hole!"

The letter was despatched that night by the post. It was not thought discreet to intrust Jock with the secret, nor to let Adam Mercer know in the meantime anything about this countermine.

Breakfast being over, Hall proposed to return to Drumsylie. Before doing so he wished some positive assurance of obtaining aid in favour of the Sergeant from Spence. But all he could get out of the keeper was to "keep his mind easy — no to fear — he wad look after the Sergeant."

Old Spence would not, however, permit of Jock's immediate departure, but invited him to remain a day or two "and rest himself." It was benevolently added, that "he could help Johnnie to fish at an odd hour, and to sort the dogs and horses in ordinary hours." The fact was, old Spence did not wish Hall to return immediately to Drumsylie, until events there had time to be affected by his letter to Smellie. Jock was too glad of the opportunity afforded him of proving that he might be trusted to do whatever work he was fitted for, and that he was not "a lazy trumper" by choice.

As the week was drawing to an end, Jock made up his mind to return to his old haunts, for home he had none. He had also an undefined longing to see the Sergeant, and to know how it fared with him.

But when the day arrived for his departure, Hugh suggested that perhaps Jock would like to see the Castle, where he had business with his Lordship to transact pertaining to the game. It was not, he said, every day he would have such a chance of seeing so grand a place, and maybe he might see his lordship! — at a distance. Besides, it would not take him far out of his road ; and Hugh, when he had finished his business, would accompany him part of the way home, as he had to visit a distant part of the estate in the discharge of his professional duties.

Jock's curiosity was excited to see the great house not as a beggar or a poacher, but under the genteel protection of a keeper and confidential servant, when a live lord might be scanned from afar without fear.

When Jock came to bid farewell to old Spence, he approached him, bonnet in hand, with every token of respect. He said little but "Thank ye — thank ye, Mr. Spence, for yer guidness ;" and whispering, added, "I'm sorry if I offended ye. But maybe ye could get a job for me if I canna fa' into honest wark at Drumsylie ? I'll break my back, or break my heart, to please you or ony daacent man that will help me to feed

my body (it's na mickle buik) and to cover't — little will keep the cauld oot, for my hide is weel tanned wi' win' and weather."

Spence looked with interest at the poor but earnest pleader at his elbow, and nodded encouragingly to him.

"Eh, man !" said Jock, "what a pity ye dinna snuff ! I wad lee ye my auld snuffbox 'gin ye wad tak' it."

Spence smiled and thanked him — ay, even shook hands with him ! — an honour which went to Jock's heart ; and Spence added, "My compliments to my cousin Adam, and tell him to keep his heart up and his pooder dry."

Mrs. Spence had prepared a good "rung" of bread and cheese, which she stuffed into Jock's pocket to support him in his journey.

"Awfu' guid o' ye — maist awfu' !" said Jock, as he eyed the honest woman pressing the food into its ragged receptacle.

Jock looked around and asked for Johnnie. On being told that he was at the stables, he went off to find him, and, having succeeded, took him aside and said — "Johnnie, laddie, I hae been treated by yer folk like a lord, tho' after a' I dinna weel ken hoo a lord is treated ; but, howsoever, wi'oot ony clavers aboot it, here's to ye in a present the best buik o' flees in the kintra side. Tak' them, and welcome." And Jock made up his "Book of Sports," which had been his most cheerful companion for many a year, and almost forcing John to take it, added, "I hae an obligation to ax : never tell yer folk aboot it till I'm awa', and never tell ony stranger between this and Drumsylie that ye got it frae Jock Hall." And before the astonished boy could thank him as the generous giver of so many keys to unlock every pool of its treasure, on every day in the year and at all seasons, Jock was off to join Hugh.

In a short time Hugh was conducting Jock towards the Castle. After they passed the lodge, and were walking along the beautiful avenue and beneath the fine old trees, with the splendid park sweeping around, the moment the turrets of the Castle were descried Hugh said, "Now, Hall, dinna speak to onybody unless they speak to you, and gie a discreet answer. The least said is soonest mended. Dae my biddin' ; for I'm takin' a great responsibility in bringin' ye in here. His lordship wadna be pleased to see a trampin' chiel like you. But I'll tak' care he doesna see ye."

"Never fear me," said Jock ; "I'll be as quiet as a dead rabbit. But I think I see'd his lordship afore ?"

" Whaur ? " asked Hugh, with an expression of astonishment.

" He ance tried me, I think, as a maugistrat' " replied Jock, equally placid.

" Tried ye ! " exclaimed Hugh, pausing in his walk as if he had got into some scrape and was about to enter a second — " tried ye for what ? "

" Oh, never heed, " said Jock ; " dinna be ower particular. It was a drucken habble I got into wi' twa tailor chappies that struck me, and my head and ee were bun' wi' a bluidy napkin at the trial, and his lordship wull no ken me."

" Was that a ! " carelessly remarked Hugh. " Ye might hae thrashed nine o' them and no got yersel' hurt."

But Jock did not tell the whole history of one of his poaching affrays.

Hugh ensconced Jock in the shrubbery until he ascertained from one of the servants that his lordship had gone out to walk in the grounds, that the ladies were taking an airing in the carriage, and that it was quite possible to get a peep into the great hall and the public rooms opening from it, without being discovered. As Hugh, accompanied by Jock, crept almost noiselessly along the passages, he directed with under-breath Jock's attention to the noble apartments, the arms and suits of mail hung round the walls of the great entrance-hall, the stags' heads, the stuffed birds, and one or two fine paintings of boar-hunts. But when the drawing-room door was opened, and there flashed upon Jock's eyes all the splendour of colour reflected from large mirrors, in which he saw, for the first time, his own odd figure from crown to toe (that made him start as if he had seen a ghost), and when through the windows he beheld all the beauty of flowers that filled the parterres, dotted with *jets d'eau*, white statues and urns, and surrounded by bowery foliage, a vision presented itself which was as new to him as if he had passed into Eden from the lodgings of Mrs. Craigie.

He did not speak a word, but only remarked that it was " nae doubt unco braw, and wad cost a heap o' siller." But, as they were retreating, suddenly the inner door of the hall opened, and his lordship stood before them !

" Heeven be about us ! " exclaimed Spence, and in a lower voice added, " Dune for, dune for life ! " He looked round him, as if for some means of concealing himself, but in vain. The door by which they had entered was closed behind them. Jock, seeing only a plain-looking little gentleman in a Glengarry bonnet and tweed suit, never

imagined that this could be a lord, and was accordingly quite composed. Spence, with his eyes fixed on the ground and his face flushed to the roots of his hair, seemed speechless.

His lordship was a slight-built man, of about forty, with pleasing hazel eyes and large moustache. He had retired from the army, and was much liked for his frank manner and good humour. Seeing his keeper in such perplexity, accompanied by a person so disreputable-looking, he said, " Hollo, Spence ! whom have you got here ? I hope not a poacher, eh ? "

I humbly beg your lordship's pardon ; but, my lord, the fac' is — stammered Hugh.

" Is that his lordship ? " whispered Jock.

" Haud yer tongue ! " replied Hugh in an undertone of intense vehemence. Then addressing his lordship, he said, " He's no poacher, my lord ; no, no, but only —

" Oh ! an acquaintance, I suppose, who —

" No that either, no that either," interrupted Hugh, as his dignity was trying on account of his companion, whom he wished a hundred miles away, " but an acquaintance o' an acquaintance o' my faither's lang syne — a most respectable man — Sergeant Mercer, in Drumsylie, and I took the leeberthy, thinking yer lordship was out, to —

" To show him the house. Quite right, Spence ; quite right ; glad you did so." Then addressing Jock, he said, " Never here before, I suppose ? "

Jock drew himself up, placed his hands along his sides, heels in, toes out, then gave the military salute.

" Been in the army ? In what regiment ? Have you seen service ? "

" Yes, sir — yes, my lord," replied Jock ; " as yer honour says, I have seen service."

This was information to Spence, who breathed more freely as he received such unexpected evidence of Jock's respectability.

" Where ? " inquired his lordship, seating himself on one of the lobby chairs, and folding his arms.

" In the berrick-yaIRD o' Stirlin', yer honour," replied Jock ; " but in what regiment I dinna mind. It was a first, second, or third something ; but I hae forgotten."

" The barrack-yard ? " said his lordship, laughing ; " pray how long did you serve his Majesty in that severe campaign ? "

" About a week, or may be a fortnight," said Jock.

"What!" exclaimed his lordship; "a fortnight only? And what after that?"

"I ran off as fast as I could," said Jock; "never stopped till I reached Drumsylie."

Hugh turned his back as if to run away, with sundry half-muttered exclamations of horror and alarm for the friend of a sergeant. His lordship burst into a fit of laughter, and said,—"On my honour, you're a candid fellow." But he evidently assumed that Jock was probably a half-witted character, who did not comprehend the full meaning of his admission. He was confirmed in his supposition by Jock going on to say, in the most easy and simple fashion,—

"I 'listed when I was fou; and though I had nae objections at ony time to fire a gun at a bird or a Frenchman, or to fecht them that wad fecht me, yet the sodjers at Stirlin' made a fule o' me, and keepit me walkin' and trampin' back and forrid for twa weeks in the yaird, as if they were breckin' a horse; and I could dae naething, neither fish, nor even shoot crows, wi'oot the leave o' an ill-tongued corporal. I couldna' thole that, could I? It wasna in the bargain, and sae I left, and they dinna think it worth their while to speer after me."

"Egad!" said his lordship, laughing, "I dare say not, I dare say not! Do you know what they might have done to you if they had caught you, my man?" asked his lordship.

"Shot me, I expec'," said Jock; "but I wasna worth the pooder; and, to tell the truth, I wad raither be shot like a gled for harryin' a paerrick's nest, than be kept a' my days in a cage o' a berricks at Stirlin'! I wasna beedin' whether they shot me or no," added Jock, looking round him, and stroking his chin as if in a half dream.

"The black dog tak' ye!" said Spence, who lost his temper. "My lord, I declare"—

"Never mind, Spence, never mind; let him speak to me; and go you to the servants' hall until I send for you."

Spence bowed and retired, thankful to be released from his present agony. His lordship, who had a passion for characters which the keeper could not comprehend, gave a sign to Jock to remain, and then went on with the following catechism.

"What did your parents do?"

"Little guid and mickle ill."

"Were you at school?"

"No that I mind o'."

"How have you lived?"

"Guid kens!"

"What have you been?"

"A ne'er-do-weel — a kin' o' cheat-the-wuddy. Sae folk tell me, and I suppose they're richt."

"Are you married?"

"That's no a bad ane, after a'" said Jock, with a quiet laugh, turning his head away.

"A bad what?" asked his lordship, perplexed by the reply.

"I jist thocht," said Jock, "yer honour was jokin' to think that ony wumman wad marry me! He! he! Lassies wad be cheaper than cast-awa shoon afore ony o' them wad tak Jock Hall — unless," he added, in a lower tone, with a laugh, "ane like Luckie Cragie. But yer lordship wull no ken her, I'se warrant."

"I have not that honour," said his lordship, with a smile. "But I must admit that you don't give yourself a good character, anyhow."

"I hae name to gie," said Jock, with the same impassible look.

"On my word," added his lordship, "I think you're an honest fellow!"

"It's mair," said Jock, "than onybody else thinks. But if I had wark, I'm no sure but I wad be honest."

His lordship said nothing, but stared at Hall as if measuring him from head to foot. Jock returned his gaze. It was as if two different portions of a broken-up world had met. His lordship felt uncertain whether to deal with Jock as a fool or as a reprobate. He still inclined to the opinion that he had "a want," and accordingly continued his catechism, asking "whether he would like to have this house?"

"I wad that!" said Jock, emphatically. "And what would you make of it?"

"I wad," replied Jock, "fill it fu' wi puir ne'er-do-weel, faitherless and mitherless bairns, and pit Sergeant Mercer and his wife ower them — that's Mr. Spence's cousin."

"Hello!" said his lordship, "that would make a large party! and what would you do with them, when here assembled, my man?"

"I wad feed them," said Jock, "wi' the sheep and nowt in the park, and the birds frae the heather, and the fish frae the burns, and gie them the flowers aboot the doors — and schule them weel, and learn them trades; and shoot them, or hang them, if they didna do weel after that."

"Ha! ha! ha! And what would you do with me and my wife and daughters?" asked his lordship.

"I wad mak you their faither, and them

their mither and sisters. Ye never wad be idle or want pleasure among sic a han-tle o' fine lads and lasses. Eh ! yer honour," continued Jock, with fire in his eyes, " ye never lay trimblin' on a stair-head on a snawy nicht ; and got a spoonfu' or twa o' cauld parritch in the mornin' tae cool ye, wi' curses and kicks tae warm ye, for no stealin' yer ain meat ; nor see'd yer wee brithers an' sisters deedin' like troots, openin' their mooths wi' naethin' to pit in them ; or faix ye wad be thankfu' tae help mitherless and faitherless bairns, and instead o' sendin' young craturs to jail wad sen' aulder folk that ill-used them ; ay, and may be some rich folk, and some ministers and elders amang them for no luikin' after them."

His lordship looked with wide-open eyes at Jock ; and for a moment, amidst his ease and luxury, his fits of *ennui* and difficulty in killing time, his sense of the shallowness and emptiness of much of his life, with the selfishness of idle society, there flashed upon his naturally kind heart a gleam of noble duties yet to perform, and noble privileges to enjoy, though not perhaps in the exact form suggested by Jock Hall. But this was not the time to discuss these. So he only said, " You are not a bad fellow — not at all. Here are a few shillings for you."

" Na ! na ! " said Jock, " I didna come here to beg ; I'll no tak them."

" Come, come ! said his lordship, " you won't disoblige me, will you ? " and he thrust the money into Jock's hand ; and ringing a bell, he ordered the servant who appeared in reply to it to take Jock to the servants' hall, and to send Hugh Spence to the business room.

Jock made a low bow and salaam, and retired.

" William," said his lordship to another servant, who happened to be passing, " go to the old clothes press and select a complete suit for that poor fellow."

When Hugh was summoned into the presence of his lordship, he had sad misgivings as to the result of the interview, and had prepared a long apologetic speech, which however he had hardly begun when he was cut short by his lordship saying, " You have picked up a rare character, Spence, upon my honour ! But I like the fellow. He is an original, and has something in him. I can't quite make him out."

" Nor me either, my lord, I do assure you," interrupted Spence.

" But I have taken rather a fancy for him. He is neither knave nor fool, yet I can-

not call him good or wise — no, no — ha ! ah ! ha ! — not that, *quite* ; but there is something about him which takes me, and if any friend of yours has an interest in him, I won't object — quite the reverse — to your getting him something to do about the kennels. I really would like it. So look to him." Hugh, having made a low bow and remained discreetly silent, according to his own prudential aphorism of "least said being soonest mended," his lordship conversed on the special business for which he had sent for him, with which we have nothing to do.

When Jock and Spence returned along the avenue, not a word was spoken for a time. Jock carried a large bundle, with the general contents of which both were acquainted. After a while Spence remarked, as if to break the silence, " Weel, what do ye think o' his lordship ? "

" He looks a fine bit decent sponsible bodie," said Jock, as if speaking of a nobody.

" I should think sae !" remarked Hugh, evidently chagrined by the cool criticism of his companion.

" Were ye no frichted for him ? " asked Hugh.

" Wha ? — me ? " replied Jock. " Frichted for what ? He said naethin' to fricht me. Certes I was main frichted when I stood afore him for thrashin' the twa tailors ! The man didna molest me, but was unco ceevil, as I was to him, and gied me siller and claes as I never got frae mortal man, no tae speak o' a lord. Frichted ! I was ower prood to be frichted."

" Aweel, aweel," said the keeper, " ye're a queer cratur, Hall ! and if ye haena' gowd ye ha'e brass. I was tremblin' for ye ! "

" Nae wunner," said Jock ; " ye had somethin' tae lose, but I had naethin'. What could he dae to me but pit me oot o' the hoose ? and I was gaun oot mysel. Jock Hall is ower far doon for ony mortal man tae pit him doon farther. He may be better, but he canna be waur. Naebody can hurt a dead dowg, can they ? "

" Tuts, Jock," said Hugh, " I didna mean to flite on ye. I ax yer pardon."

" Gae awa, gae awa wi' yer nonsense, Mr. Spence ! " replied Jock — " that's what naebody ever did, to ax my pardon, and it's no for a man like you to begin. Ye might as weel ax a rattan's pardon for eatin' a yer cheese. In troth I'm no gien mysel tae that fashion o' axin' pardons, for it wad be a heap o' trouble for folk to grant them. But, man, if I got wark, I would maybe be able yet to ax pardon o' a decent man, and to get it too for the axin' ! "

"I'll no forget ye, I do assure ye," said Spence, kindly. "You and me may meet afore lang up the way at the cottage."

Jock could not resist the new emotion which prompted him to seize the keeper's hand and give it a hearty squeeze. On the strength of the renewed friendship, he offered him a snuff.

The keeper, from commands received from his lordship, found that he could not accompany Jock as far on his road as he had anticipated, but was obliged to part with him where his path to Drumsylie led across the moorland. Here they sat down on a heathery hill, when Spence said, "Before we part, I would like to ken frae yersel', Hall, how *ye* are a frien' to Adam Mercer?"

"I never said I was a frien' to Adam Mercer," replied Jock.

Hugh, as if for the first time suspecting Hall of deception, said firmly, "But *ye* did! I declare *ye* did, and my faither believed you!"

"I never did sic a thing," said Jock, as firmly, in reply. "I couldna say that wi'oot a lee, and *that* I never telt tae you or yours, altho' I hae telt an unco heap to ser' my turn in my day. But I said that Adam Mercer was a frien' to me."

Hugh, not quite perceiving the difference yet, asked, "Hoo was he a frien' to you?"

"I'll tell *ye*," said Jock, looking earnestly at Hugh. "Had a man ta'en *ye* into his hoose, and fed *ye* whan starvin', and pit shoon on *ye* whan barefittit, and spak to *ye* no as if *ye* were a brute beast, I tak it *ye* wad understan' what a frien' was! Mind *ye* what I said, that I'm no sic a gomeril — bad as I am — or *sae* wantin' in decency as to even mysel' to be the Sergeant's frien', but I said he was *my* frien' — and that he was!"

"What way wur *ye* brocht up that *ye* cam to be *sae* puir as to need Adam's assistance or ony other man's? *Ye* surely had as guid a chancee as ony o' yer neebors?"

Jock's countenance began to assume that excited expression which the vivid recollection of his past life, especially of his youth, seemed always to produce. But Hall tried to check himself when symptoms of his hysteria began to manifest themselves in the muscles of his throat. He rose and took a few hurried paces to and fro on the heather, as if resolved to gain his self-possession, and not leave his newly-acquired friend the keeper under the impression that he was either desperately wicked or incurably insane. A new motive had come into play — a portion of his heart which had lain as it were dormant until stimulated by the Sergeant's

kindness had assumed a power which was rapidly, under benign influences, gaining the ascendency. In spite of, or rather perhaps because of, his inward struggle, his face for a moment was deadly pale. His hands were clenched. He seemed as if discharging from every muscle a stream of suddenly-generated electricity. Turning at length to Hugh, he said, with knit brow and keenly-piercing eyes, "What made *ye* ax me sic a question, Mr. Spence? — What for? I'll no tell *ye*, for I canna tell you or ony man hoo I was brocht up!"

But he did tell him — as if forced to do so in order to get rid of the demon — much of what our readers already know of those sad days of misery, and he added, "And noo, had *ye* been like a wild fox and the hounds after *ye*, and nae mair cared for than a dawg wi' a kettle at its tail, hidin' half mad up a close ayont a midden; or a cat nigh staned to death, pechin' its life awa' in a hole; and if *ye* kent never a man or woman but hated *ye*, and, waur than a', gin *ye* hated them; and if *ye* heard your ain faither and mither cursing *ye* frae the time *ye* war a bairn till they gaed awa' in their coffins wi' your curses followin' after them, — *ye* wad ken what it was to hae ae friend on earth; — and now I hae mair than ane!" And poor Jock, for the first time probably in his life, sobbed like a child.

Spence said nothing but "puir fellow!" and whiffed his pipe, which he had just lighted, with more than usual vehemence.

Jock soon resumed his usual calm,

*"As one whose brain demoniac frenzy fires
Owes to his fit, in which his soul hath lost,
Profounder quiet, when the fit retires,—
Even so the dire phantasma which had crost
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening stream."*

The keeper, hardly knowing what to say, remarked, "It's ae consolation, that your wicked faither and mither will be weel punished noo for a' their sins. *Ye* needna curse them! They're beyond ony haim that *ye* can do them. They're cursed eneuch, wi'oot your meddlin' wi' them."

"Guid forbid!" exclaimed Jock. "I houp no! I houp no! That wad be maist awfu'!"

"Maybe," said the keeper; "but it's what they deserve. And surely when their ain bairn curses them, *he* can say naethin' against it."

"I never cursed them, did I?" asked Jock, as if stupified.

"Ye did that, and nae mistak'!" replied the keeper.

"Losh, it was a bad job if I did!" said Jock. "I'm sure I dinna want to hairm them, puir bodies, though they hairmed me. In fac' I'm willin' tae let byganes be byganes wi' them, and sae maybe their Maker will no be ower sair on them. Ye dinna think, Mr. Spence, that it's possible my faither and mither are baith in the bad place?"

"Whaur else wad they be, if no there?" asked the keeper.

"It's mair than I can say!" replied Jock. "I only thocht they were dead in the kirk-yard. But — but — ken ye ony road o' gettin' them oot if they're there?"

"Ye had better," said Hugh, "gie ower botherin' yesel' to take *them* oot; rather try, man, to keep *yersel'* oot."

"Lost sheep! — lost money! — lost, ne'er-do-weel prodigal!" muttered Jock, as he gazed on the heather at his feet; "an' I'm here and them there! How comes that about?" he asked, in a dreamy mood.

"God's mercy!" answered Hugh; "and we should be merciful to ither folk, as God is merciful to oursel's."

"That's what for I wish thaue puir souls to get oot o' that jail! But I'll never curse faither or mither mair," muttered Jock.

"The less the better," said the keeper. "That wark is no' for man! An' as for them that's awa', the Bible says, 'Shall not the Judge o' a' the yirth do richt?' I wad think sae! Let us tak care o' oorsel's, and o' them that's leevin', an' God will do what's richt tae them that's ayont the grave. He has mair wisdom and love than us!"

Jock was engaged outwardly in tearing bits of heather, and twisting them mechanically together; but what his inward work was I know not. At last he said, "I haena heard an aith sin' I left Drumsylie, and that's extraordinar' to me, I can assure you, Mr. Spence!"

"Dinna let yer heart doon ower far, Jock," said the keeper, kindly. "I'll stan' yer friend, especially sin his lordship wishes me to help you. Ye have got guid claes in that bundle, I se warrant — the verra claes worn by himself! Pit them on ye, and think what's on ye, and be daacent! Drop a' drinkin', swearin', and sic trash; bend yer back tae your burden, ca' yer han's at yer wark, pay yer way, and keep a ceevil tongue in yer head, and then 'whistle ower

the lave o't!'. There's my han' to ye. Farewell, and ye'll hear frae me some day soon."

"God's blessin' be wi' ye!" replied poor Jock.

They then rose and parted. Each awhile looked over his shoulder and waved his hand.

One of the first things Jock did after parting with Hugh was to undo his parcel, and when he did so there was spread before his wondering eyes such a display of clothing of every kind as he had never dreamt of in connection with his own person. All seemed to his eyes as if fresh from the tailor's hands. Jock looked at his treasures in detail, held them up, turned them over, laid them down, and repeated the process with such a grin on his face and exclamations on his lips as can neither be described nor repeated. After awhile his resolution seemed to be taken; for descending to a clear mountain stream, he stripped himself of his usual habiliments, and, though they were old familiar friends, cast them aside as if in scorn, stuffing them into a hole in the bank. After performing long and careful ablutions, he decked himself in his new rig, and tying up in a bundle his superfluous trappings, emerged on the moorland in appearance and in dignity the very lord of the manor! "Faix," thought Jock, as he paced along, "the Sterlin' wasna far wrang when it telt me that 'a man's a man for a' that'!"

Instead of pursuing his way direct to Drumsylie, he diverged to a village half-way between Castle Bennock and his final destination. With his money in his pocket he put up like a gentleman at a superior lodging-house, where he was received with the respect becoming his appearance. Early on Sunday morning, when few were awake, he entered Drumsylie with a sheepish feeling and such fear of attracting the attention of its *gamins* as made him run quickly to the house of an old widow, where he hoped to avoid all impertinent inquiries until he could determine upon his future proceedings. These were materially affected by the information which in due time he received, that Adam Mercer had been suddenly seized with illness on the day after he had left Drumsylie, and was confined to bed.

From the Saturday Review, May 11.

THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

THE task of the London Conference was virtually accomplished when Lord STANLEY consented to guarantee the neutrality of Luxemburg. From the first there had evidently been little risk of failure, inasmuch as both the litigants and the assessors were deeply interested in a successful result. The latest precedent of a similar meeting was happily in all respects inapplicable. In the middle of the Danish war, and in view of the inevitable defeat of the weaker party, the English Government made a desperate attempt to terminate hostilities by inducing the belligerents to meet with the neutral Powers in conference. Unfortunately, Prussia, then servilely followed by Austria, had determined on completing the conquest of Schleswig; nor were all the arbitrators sincere in their desire for peace. The Emperor of the FRENCH had been irritated by the refusal of England either to go to war on behalf of Poland, or to concur in his proposal of a European Congress; and consequently, throughout the Danish war, he affected to regard the successes of Germany rather as a check to England than as a menace to himself. The Plenipotentiaries at the present Conference have had the easier duty of saving the honour of two Governments which would otherwise have engaged in an unprofitable duel. In strict justice, it might have been sufficient to reject the unfounded pretensions of France, which had no ground for interfering with the Prussian occupation of Luxemburg; but a decision in favour of one party would certainly not have terminated the quarrel. Diplomatic tribunals are rather mediators than judges; and, luckily, the King of HOLLAND contributed to the settlement of the dispute a colourably legal claim on the fortress of Luxemburg. As long as he was, in his ducal capacity, a German prince, the presence of a Prussian garrison in a Federal fortress was perfectly compatible with his sovereign rights; but the violent dissolution of the Confederacy, followed by the exclusion of Luxemburg from the new North-German League, technically converted the mixed right of the GRAND DUKE into absolute dominion. Not thinking it expedient to demand the evacuation of the fortress, and feeling some uneasiness at the possible demands of Prussia on his more important possessions, the King of HOLLAND proposed to transfer Luxemburg, with all its appendages, to an owner

who might be able and willing to prosecute a doubtful claim. It was in virtue of the contract with the GRAND DUKE that France acquired an interest in the subject-matter, but Prussia was fully justified in regarding the occupation of Luxemburg as a German or European question, lying wholly beyond the competence of the local ruler. If the fortress was considered a necessary safeguard against a French invasion of Germany, it was absurd to transfer it to the possible invader. On the other hand, the Prussian garrison offered no menace to France which might not have been as reasonably apprehended or resented at any time during the last two-and-fifty years. The military importance of the position is probably exaggerated in conventional language for diplomatic purposes. CARNOT, indeed, is said to have asserted that Luxemburg was, after Gibraltar, the most formidable fortress in Europe; but modern experience, in America and elsewhere, has shown that strong places may be extemporized during war; and, when Luxemburg is demolished, there is nothing to prevent the Prussian Government from doubling the defences and armament of Trèves. The real security both of Germany and of France consists in the unlimited resources of either Power, and in the certainty that permanent conquests on either side would be impossible. The hope of recovering Alsace or Lorraine has for several generations ceased to inspire the most sanguine of German patriots; and though French ambition has been more recently undeceived, the disillusion has extended rapidly in the course of the present dispute. Less than a year has passed since the negotiation for the Saarbruck coal-fields, and the stranger demand for a rectification of the frontier. The discovery that even the purchase of a German principality is impracticable will not fail to be remembered.

Since France required some concession as a pretext for withdrawing an untenable claim, it was obviously necessary that Prussia also should get something, or seem to get something. There is indeed every reason to believe that the strong man of Germany, fully armed, will, without the aid of any Conference, henceforth keep his house in peace; but as he is requested to unfasten one joint of his harness, he naturally asks his friendly advisers to provide him with an equivalent security. The neutralization of Luxemburg may possibly be equivalent to a fortified town, as long as it is respected in time of war; but garrisons and batteries protect themselves,

while parchment limitations of the rights of war tend to become inoperative as soon as they are applicable. If a French army wished to pass through Luxemburg on its way to Rhenish Prussia, it would probably be found that some breach of engagement on the part of the enemy justified a disregard of pledges of neutrality. The Great Powers were therefore desired to prove the sincerity of their love of peace by making themselves responsible for the neutrality of Luxemburg ; and, by the acceptance of the proposal, Germany has obtained a perfect verbal security against the dangers which are supposed to arise from the demolition of the fortress. The Prussian demand was reasonable, although the English Plenipotentiaries were at first naturally unwilling to undertake new Continental liabilities. Lord STANLEY is a consistent advocate of non-interference, but he properly regarded the case of Luxemburg as exceptional. To a certain extent, the guarantee will be only renewed, or continued ; for the territory of the King of the NETHERLANDS was guaranteed by the Great Powers in 1814, and all existing securities were expressly maintained at the final arrangement between Belgium and Holland in 1839. It is true that the evacuation of the fortress will render the obligation more onerous, as well as more necessary, especially as the proposed pledge will be given to Prussia, rather than to Belgium or Holland ; but, on a balance of inconveniences, Lord STANLEY has determined to remove the only remaining obstacle to a settlement of the principal dispute. The neutrality of Luxemburg is henceforth guaranteed by the six Great Powers, including Italy, which owes to England the formal recognition of its well-earned rank in Europe. The Conference has apparently not undertaken to determine the commercial position of the neutralized territory. It is evident that Luxemburg cannot, like a French province before the Revolution, establish a fiscal system of its own, or allow its produce to be taxed as soon as it passes the frontier. It is equally impossible that it should trade freely with both its powerful neighbours, as the French and German Customs systems reciprocally exclude one another. Unless the province is to be deprived of all hope of prosperity, it must be enclosed within one of the two commercial frontiers. The inhabitants, having hitherto traded chiefly with Germany, would prefer unrestricted intercourse with the States of the Zollverein to any advantage which could be derived from free access to French markets ; and their wishes

are seconded by the French iron-masters, who object to competition with the ore of Luxemburg. Diplomatists will look rather to the political consequences of commercial amalgamation than to the material interests of the province. If a little army of French Custom-house officers separated Luxemburg from Germany, the Duchy might almost as well be a department of France ; and experience has shown that the Customs-Union which Prussia has long directed has a tendency to produce political approximation. It is difficult to understand Count BISMARCK's motive for having left Luxemburg, after last year's war, outside the new Confederation and the Zollverein. He may probably be still indifferent to a commercial union with the Duchy, but he will certainly oppose a corresponding pretension on the part of France.

With the happy close of the deliberations of the Conference, charges and recriminations will cease to disturb timid minds. German journalists complained that the armaments of France were proceeding, while Prussia had not yet summoned a soldier to his colours, or bought an additional horse. It is possible that the statement may have had some foundation in fact, although it was probably exaggerated ; but though the numbers of the French army may have been increased, the Government, even if it had wished to deceive an enemy, would not have wantonly encouraged the hopes of its subjects for the purpose of aggravating their subsequent disappointment. The Emperor NAPOLEON has ascertained, by his recent experiment, the entire change which has passed over the minds of the present generation. The great body of Frenchmen regard the speeches of M. THIERS and the inflammatory essays of M. DE GIRARDIN as antiquarian relics of obsolete opinion. The keen susceptibility of the nation to any stain on its honour retains its former delicacy, but the great body of politicians decline to regard the partial realization of German unity as an affront to France. In the present instance, as in many others, popular cant serves as an index to the public opinion which it echoes and travesties. The working-men who have been taught by habitual adulation to assume the airs of a representative aristocracy publish platitudes in favour of peace with their German brethren, which are at least more innocent than demands for the aggrandizement of France. That French democracy, reflecting on its own qualities, should select a love of peace as its favourite virtue, is a whimsical proof of the blindness which attends corporate as

well as individual vanity. Not many years have passed since democratic writers, including MICHELET and VICTOR HUGO, held up moderate Governments to the contempt of patriots, because they neglected to resume the boundaries of the Republic and the Empire. As a German poet said with more truth than melody, the greedy ravens were always croaking themselves hoarse about the Rhine, which his countrymen, for their part, absolutely refused to surrender. It is one of the advantages of democracy that conversion operates simultaneously on masses, and that deserted creeds are instantly forgotten. Twenty years of victory had persuaded the French people that it was their mission to propagate civilization by conquest. Half a century of peace had scarcely untaught them the disastrous lesson; but the rise of Italy, and more especially of Germany, seems to have convinced Frenchmen of the present day that other nations also have rights, and that peace is better than war. The Germans, having for centuries found themselves the victims of French ambition, were excusably suspicious, and jealous of making the first concession; but the intelligent opinion of Europe was unanimously opposed to an unnecessary contest, and in smoothing away the difficulties which impeded a friendly arrangement, the Conference has enjoyed the great advantage of swimming with the stream.

From the Spectator, May 11.

LORD STANLEY AND THE LUXEMBURG QUESTION.

WHAT is an endorsement on the back of a bill? Is it a promise to pay if the other parties to the transaction do not, or only in case they do? We should have thought that a simple question enough in commercial ethics, but that the *Times* has chosen this week to assume the second answer. It declares that no man is responsible for his signature unless the acceptor has paid the bill, and so rendered the signature unnecessary. The Prussian Government has been asked to evacuate the fortress of Luxemburg as a concession to the sensitive dignity of France, and has agreed, it is reported, upon the condition that Europe shall guarantee its neutrality. In plainer words, each of the Five Powers is to pledge itself in writing to declare war upon any Power which may attempt to seize this military position. Thereupon, the *Times* declares that such a

promise is without danger, because "if all the Powers act together resistance would be out of the question, while, on the other hand, any repudiation by one Power of its obligations would necessarily absolve the others." If the acceptor does not pay the endorser ceases to be liable, a novel doctrine, which proclaimed in big type in the City article of the first commercial journal in the world, will, we doubt not, carry much comfort to the souls of bankrupts, speculators, and rogues generally. If Lord Stanley has agreed to guarantee Luxemburg with any such *arrêts pensée*, he has simply agreed to a fraud which, of all forms of political fraud, we should have thought most alien to his political character. His forte is surely judicious directness, not diplomatic subtlety, and till he himself avows it we refuse to believe that he is playing a game of which Lord Palmerston would have been ashamed. He did at least try to keep his pledge to Denmark. The need of the guarantee can only arise when Luxemburg has been occupied by one of the Powers, and if that occupation of itself annuls the pledge, what is the use of giving it? It is merely a farce, a pledge to do that which, while pledging ourselves, we acknowledge that we never intend to do—a grandiloquent assertion that we will be responsible for the bill if the acceptor pays it. Even the *Times* seems to feel this is a little disreputable, for after using this argument it argues that the pledge after all is a little one, because we already guarantee Holland. As a matter of fact, that statement is a trick, for we do not directly guarantee Holland against the great Powers, but only against Belgium—a very different thing; but suppose we do, as Lord Stanley on Thursday seemed to assume, what is that to the point? The guarantee for Holland, on the *Times'* own showing, is as unreal as any other. Nobody but a great power can attack Holland, and the moment a great power breaks its obligation ours ceases, and we may skulk away contented, like a hound who has stolen a bone and escaped the expected whip. We are not liable, because the contingency we promised to provide against has occurred. "If you hit that little boy again," says Fifth Form, "I shall thrash you," and the bully desists. By and by, plucking up his courage, he hits the little boy, and Fifth Form walks off, consoling himself as he goes by muttering that if "people will not keep their agreements he is not bound to keep his."

We looked to Lord Stanley to pursue a manlier diplomacy than this, and must, till

he confesses the contrary, believe that he intends the guarantee, if he gives it, to be a reality, a promise to resist the use of Luxemburg by France against Germany. That is the common sense of the pledge, that is why it is asked, that is why it is conceded. And in this view, we believe, no more dangerous pledge could be made by Great Britain. It is nonsense to compare it with our guarantee of Belgium. We should fight for Belgium anyhow, and the guarantee makes no practical difference, except to give the advocates of war a new and unanswerable argument. But without the guarantee we should not dream of fighting for Luxemburg. Moreover, no power will attack Belgium merely as an incident in a campaign; but Luxemburg is very likely indeed to be incidentally occupied. It is just the place a French General, wanting to sever railway communications along the Rhine, would declare himself compelled to take, and then Prussia would be able to demand our alliance against France. We do not want to fight France. Except a war with America, no calamity could be so detrimental to us, to Europe, and to civilization, so ruinous to commerce, so fatal to progress, so meaningless in result. What have we to get from France? Yet if the guarantee does not mean that we are liable to a risk of this demand, to a sudden war with our nearest neighbour, or a confession of cowardice before the world, what does it mean? If we are to allow France to take Luxemburg, what does Prussia gain in exchange for her fortress? Just this,—that if it is very convenient to us to defend Luxemburg, we shall have legal *locus standi* when we say we intend to do it. What is the value of that to Prussia—of her right to ask an acquaintance to commence a grand Chancery suit for her own advantage and his detriment?

But we shall be told the guarantee is essential to preserve the honour of Prussia, and so to maintain peace. It is a bit of high comedy, like an English duel, but one which it is necessary for the political grandes to go through with. There is a certain amount of truth in that suggestion, but then the question arises why England, which of all Powers manages high comedy worst, should be compelled to play her part. How is it her interest? The *Times*, which cares about nothing but the price of Consols, always assumes that peace is the grand interest of this country, and that might be true, were the peace real. But it may very well be doubted whether the condition of armed preparation now maintained all over Eu-

rope is not worse than war, whether it does not exhaust the nations more, more deeply imperil the profits upon trade. At all events, it is clear that there is a future price at which even peace may be dear. If France and Prussia equally accept our mediation, and find no new cause of quarrel in some detail, and rest content without trying their relative strength about Luxemburg, then we shall have purchased a postponement of a war which we can keep out of, at the price of a future war into which, if we are decently honest and straightforward, we must perforce enter. We buy an escape from the annoyance of giving evidence in a Chancery suit at the price of a Chancery suit to which we shall be principal parties. That is at least exceedingly bad economy, as Lord Stanley out of office would probably be the first to see.

It would be rather a grotesque finale for the negotiations if we found ourselves burdened with a guarantee without obtaining the compensatory peace. Of course, as England assents to the *sine qua non*, war can, if France and Prussia are equally willing, be easily postponed, but are they willing? The Foreign Office thinks so apparently, but the British Foreign Office has always shown itself the most credulous of detective establishments, and the broad facts do not bear out that theory. It is almost certain, as certain as anything carefully concealed by officials can be, that France is arming fast, and that Berlin is taking either real or affected umbrage at these armaments, the reality and the affectation being about equally dangerous. It is argued, of course, in France that the collection of the camp at Châlons two months earlier than usual, the enlargement of that camp, the completion of the works at Metz, the incessant manufacture of cartridges, the increase in the effectives, and above all, the calling out of the reserves, are all precautionary measures; but they have been taken on a scale and at a cost which Sovereigns do not sanction unless they see very serious dangers ahead, and they are continuing now, when, to believe the newspapers and the funds, the reign of peace has been solidly re-established. Why is the Emperor embarrassing his exchequer, if he feels so certain that the Conference is sure to give him a great diplomatic victory, for the evacuation of Luxemburg is a victory for him? and why does Count von Bismarck pass the word to demi-official journals to complain of armaments which, as he knows, cannot be made the subject of official remonstrance? France will not take orders as to the extent of her

armaments from any power in the world, at least of all from the one which has so recently excited her jealousy, and with which she is in such open diplomatic conflict. It is not like Count von Bismarck to publish statements so wounding to the *amour propre* of an adversary merely because they are wounding, with no intention of following them up, and no motive in calling the attention of the people behind him. The clouds are very thick still, and though they seem to be breaking, perhaps we may say are breaking, the barometer is still far from having risen to "set fair." Despite the meeting of Conference, the acceptance of a basis, — the neutralization of the Duchy, — which does not involve the grand point at issue, and the optimist tone of the British official world, the grand security for peace is still that if Napoleon fights he knows he must succeed, and that in a war between equals success is never certain.

One word more. If the Conference succeeds in maintaining peace one fact will be established of far greater importance than any possible solution of the Luxembourg question. The European tribunal dissolved by the Crimean war will have been re-established, to the immense benefit of mankind. There is no longer a power on the Continent which can do as it likes, without consulting anybody, but many Powers so equal and so bound together that they must perforce prefer the *régime* of law to the *régime* of force. The fate of Belgium and Holland, for example, is no longer dependent upon Napoleon's fiat, or that of Denmark upon the policy of Berlin. The Powers are jealous again, and with reason, and every accession of territory, however small, every intrigue, however secret, will be watched with anxious care, and, if needful, arrested by the Council of Five, which alone has the strength to maintain the European peace and an interest in doing so. When France arms to obtain a bit of outlying land and cannot obtain it, Europe is safe from the aggression of any less potent State.

From the Economist, May 11.

LORD STANLEY'S ENGLISH GUARANTEE.

LORD STANLEY admitted on Thursday night that he has engaged on behalf of England to give the guarantee of the neutrality of Luxembourg demanded by Prussia from the great Powers. It seems to be Lord Stanley's happy fortune, after representing

as long as he has been in Parliament an almost extreme form of the principle of non-intervention, to come out as the direct heir to Lord Palmerston's policy in both extorting satisfaction for real injuries from weak but presumptuous nations, and in multiplying those vague and dangerous engagements of the English Crown, which we have more than once had to regret bitterly in the past. We not only do not blame, we heartily approve of, Lord Stanley's policy in the case of the dispute with Spain concerning the Queen Victoria. It was not a pleasant thing for England, who took so humble a part in the great European dispute of 1864, to have to take so high-handed a line with Spain in 1866. *Parcer superbis, debellere subjectos*, has been rather too much the English motto under Lord Palmerston's foreign policy. But that is not Lord Stanley's fault, and no Minister in his place could have done otherwise than he did in our little misunderstanding with Spain. But it will be, we think, his fault and greatly to his discredit if he completes, as he intimates that he intends to complete, this hitherto merely accidental resemblance, by launching England into new and large engagements, the true bearing of which on our own national interests, if ever we are called upon to fulfil them, no one can foresee; and the high probability that we shall some day be called upon to fulfil them, every one can even now foresee. Indeed, as far as we can understand, the only apology which is made for the policy of giving an English guarantee to the neutrality of Luxembourg, is, that while it staves off the war for the present, it does not much enlarge the extent of our engagements for the future. Now, the fact is quite the reverse. If we take these new engagements, honestly and with the sincere purpose of keeping them to the best of our ability, they do enlarge indefinitely, most dangerously, our liabilities for the future. If we take them in the strong hope, and with a half-formed resolve, that some way shall be found to relieve us of these engagements if ever they become troublesome, then we are guilty of one of the most dishonourable acts of which any nation could be guilty. Two great nations relying on our guarantee, and asserting that they would not rely on anything less, that we will assist in protecting the neutrality of Luxembourg from violation in case of any great European quarrel, retire from the threatening position they had just assumed. Each of them believes that we are now bound to prevent a very advantageous position from falling into the hands of its adversary; that if it should ever be

desired by that adversary, we are bound to help the other in recovering it, and punishing the breach of faith. They consider that this promise of help from us in preventing Luxembourg from becoming a stronghold in their adversary's hand, will compensate for any advantage they might now have, either in position or preparation. Prussia has at present a great advantage in position. She holds Luxembourg, and can stay there if she pleases. If she retires, she retires on the express understanding that we will aid her in preventing it from ever falling into French hands, or in recovering it from French hands and restoring its neutrality, if necessary. If we are permitting Prussia to give up this great advantage of possession, in reliance on our aid for protecting the neutrality of Luxembourg against France in years to come, and yet are not ourselves prepared to sacrifice much, in life, and money, and prosperity, for the sake of redeeming that pledge, whenever it may be demanded from us, we are setting the disgraceful example of light promises and insincere professions. When the *Times* says, in apology for this most serious and important responsibility which we are undertaking, "England would never dream of committing herself to isolated action in this matter; she undertakes no responsibility which is not, to the same extent, shared by every member of the Conference;" it is evident that it means to point out a probable mode of escape from the obligation we are incurring, founded on the likelihood that some other members of the guaranteeing Conference will repudiate their obligations. Now, we must say that to enter into this obligation in the express hope that if it should ever be incumbent on us to fulfil it, we can, probably, plead other bad examples as an excuse for not complying, is to accustom ourselves, from the very beginning, to the idea that we are not, in any serious sense, undertaking a national obligation at all. Of course, no question of putting the guarantee in execution can arise till some one power fails in her duty. If that one Power be a *great* power, — such a power as France or Prussia for instance, — it is not likely that she will fail alone. She will have supporters and advocates in the excuses she will make for her failure. In that case, and that alone, the true obligation of our guarantee comes into effect. We ought then to say at once, "We side against the power which violates the neutrality of Luxembourg;" and if, on the contrary, we say, "Our obligation to observe the treaty is no greater than that of the offending power; as France or Prussia is indifferent to national obligations, we

cannot be expected to stand to ours," — where was the force of the obligation? The whole guarantee is, then, a mockery, delusion, and snare. It *cannot* have any active effect until some one of the great Powers breaks through it. And if that is to justify us also in crying off, the whole thing is a pretence and a sham. We maintain that if we enter into this very serious obligation, we ought to do so in all honour and scrupulousness, and with the deliberate intention of aiding those who are true to the treaty against any who are untrue to it, at great national sacrifice and cost. To begin by insinuating that our obligation is no greater than that of others, and that we can cry off if others do, is to begin with dishonourable intentions already half-formed in our minds.

But we are told by Lord Stanley, by the *Times* and the *Standard*, that this guarantee for the neutrality of Luxembourg is no real enlargement of the engagements we have already taken, almost, indeed, a diminution of them, because it defines better what we are expected to do, and extends the number of our colleagues in the duty. Certainly this is a very important argument, if only it were a true one. *Prima facie*, it does not seem very probable that it can be true. Prussia would scarcely insist on our giving this guarantee of neutrality as a *sine qua non*, if it did not give her any fresh security. We are told that war or peace depended on our giving this engagement. In that case, it does not seem a very plausible statement that our engagement is no practical addition to our national responsibilities. War or peace would scarcely depend on our signing a merely formal document, which could not alter the practical course of events. And, in truth, nothing can be more absurdly contrary to the fact than to say that the new guarantee does not extend, and extend in a very important way, the military obligations of England. What is argued by the organs of the Government, — the *Times* and *Standard*, — is, that we have already guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium, and, of course, of Belgian Luxembourg, so that to take in a few more square miles of neutral territory will not make much difference. Unfortunately, it makes this difference, that the territory now to be included is to be included precisely on this account, — that it contains the key to a wholly new set of international jealousies and military positions. Belgium, as guaranteed at present, is a responsibility heavy enough. Practically, the guarantee of French Belgium is a guarantee against France, the only country speaking in any

measure the same language with Belgium, and likely on any account to covet its possession. But the new piece of country is a fragment of German soil, and is likely to be coveted—indeed, is coveted at present—by both France and Germany alike. It is, what Belgium Luxembourg has never been, the bone of contention between two first-class Powers of great military resources—nay, it is what Belgian Luxembourg has never been, a military position of the first strategic importance, both from its natural advantages and from its holding the centre of a widely-branching railway system. So far is it from the truth, that we do not extend our obligations by taking this territory into the area where neutrality is guaranteed, that the effectual motive which has induced Lord Stanley to promise this guarantee is the entirely new security which it gives to Prussia and France that Great Britain will side with either in preventing the attempt of the other to seize, annex, or garrison it. Small as the territory of Dutch Luxembourg is, it is the key of a new and most important political and military position, which the rise of North Germany to its great European position has rendered one of the first importance to each of the great European rivals of the future. It is this wholly new political and military battle-ground, the neutrality of which we have for the first time engaged to guarantee.

When it is said that we have virtually guaranteed this before, it must be said in complete ignorance of our actual treaty obligations. Lord Stanley says that "we have guaranteed the Duchy of Luxembourg to the King of Holland in the most full, absolute, and unqualified manner." Now, in the first place, that is only a guarantee of *territorial possession*, and not a guarantee of neutrality; nor does it touch in the least the question now at issue,—the right of garrisoning the fortress of Luxembourg. Nobody cares about the mere territorial possession. No one will go to war for a few square miles of country. It is the right of garrison now in dispute, and that is the real stress of the difficulty. The King of Holland might hold the territory for ever, and no one dispute it, if only Prussia or France could have either of them her way about the military question. The treaty of 1831 defined the limits of Belgium, and gave Belgium the guarantee of Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, for its independence and neutrality. The treaty of 1839 altered the boundaries of Luxembourg as between Belgium and Holland; and again gave to Belgium,—not to Holland, to whom

the territory now in question belongs,—the guarantee of the same powers for its political independence and neutrality. "Belgium," said the 7th Article of the annex to that treaty, "within the limits specified in Articles I, II, and IV, shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State. It shall be bound to observe neutrality towards all other States." We have never given any such guarantee as that to Holland or Dutch Luxembourg. The claims of Holland to that sort of European guardianship must be traced back to the general arrangements of 1814 and 1815, which have so constantly been violated by all the powers who were parties to those treaties, especially in the case of one of the strongest guarantees given,—the case of Cracow,—that every one now admits that they have lost validity. The treaties of 1831 and 1839 give no sort of engagement on the part of Great Britain that it will defend the independence or the neutrality of Holland in general, still less of Dutch-Luxembourg. They only guarantee *territory* to Holland,—territory and independence and neutrality to Belgium.

When it is said that it is not easy to imagine any campaign in which the Dutch territory of Luxembourg could be seized by any great Power, and in which the neutrality of Belgian Luxembourg would not also be violated, an argument is raised which has not only no force at all, but if it had, would be good for a gradual extension of our guarantee to the whole of Europe. If, because we have guaranteed one spot of ground liable to certain dangers, we are to guarantee all neighbouring spots of ground liable to other and different dangers, there is no reason why we should ever stop at all. The use of such an argument as this by the advocates of Lord Stanley's policy shows the essential weakness of Lord Stanley's position.

The simple truth is, that in guaranteeing the neutrality of the spot occupied by the present fortress of Luxembourg, we do enter once more on the dangerous policy of giving vague and most important engagements, the force of which we hardly know ourselves, and which, indeed, we set out by wishing to make light of, and the execution of which, whenever it is demanded from us, perhaps in a quite different state of Europe, may be contrary to our interests and contrary even to the true demands of political justice. We are going to do this on the spendthrift principle, that to accept a bill for an indefinite sum not due for an indefinite time, is always better than to make an immediate sacrifice of comfort, however small. It would

be very disagreeable to us to see Europe going to war just now. We can stave off this war by taking new, vague, indefinitely large obligations for the future, which we hope we may be never called upon, and in our hearts we have never seriously resolved, to fulfil. We ourselves should object seriously even to repeating again the words of obligation, which have now lost so much force through the violations of their pledges by all the parties to the treaties of 1814 and 1815; to renew, formally, those obligations would be in itself a fresh obligation. But not only to renew but to add to them obligations of a very formidable nature, seems to us a policy of the most alarming kind. And the Minister who takes these obligations in our name is the Minister on whom we have all so long depended for refusing the sanction of England to the policy of vague, and dangerous because vague, interventions.

From All The Year Round.

GENUINE LETTER OF THANKS.

THE following epistle, for the genuineness of which we have authority to vouch, bears no date, but is known to have been written about the year 1770.

It is an interesting, because authentic, evidence of the social position of the "Parson" in a bygone day; who was hat in hand to his patron; who thought it in no wise derogatory to his clothe to dine in the servants' hall, to pay court to the house-keeper, and make love to my lady's "woman," or even to marry her, with my lady's countenance and approval. A social position admirably described by MACAULAY.

As concerns the letter itself, the mingled simplicity and servility of the good man, its author, his gratitude for favours conferred, and his keen eye towards benefits to come, his presentation of his family after the fashion of modern mendicants of a lower class, his prolixity and tautology (frightfully suggestive of the sermons under which such of his parishioners as understood English—they were, probably, few, for he was a Welsh parson—groaned on Sundays), these points, and other humourous touches of character self-disclosed, make the letter very curious and droll.

Reverend and Worthy, Indulgent and Compassionate, Bounteous and very Valuable Sir.

The present you have sent me has laid

me under an obligation to write rather sooner than I intended; and if I was not to seize the very first opportunity that offered to return you thanks after the reception of so considerable a present, I should be guilty of such a piece of insensibility and ingratitude as the very stones (to allude to the dialect of Heaven) would become vocal, and rise up and upbraid me; especially as a few grateful expressions may be so easily uttered without any expense obtained, and the least that can be rendered to any person by whom a favour is bestowed. No one is more ready to acknowledge a benefit, nor, perhaps, less able to make a retaliation, than myself. I have it in my heart to do as much, and in my power to do as little, as any man living; however, as far as the efficacy and value of thankful and affectionate expressions extend, I am free to do the uttermost, and if it was possible for a sheet of paper to contain, on the one hand, and if it was not altogether unnecessary on the other, I would give you as many thanks as the clothes contain threads.

I thank you, dear sir, for the handsome and very valuable black coat, I thank you for the genteel blue coat, I thank you for the neat cloth breeches, I thank you for the pieces you have sent to repair them with, I thank you for the beautiful wig, I thank you for paying the carriage of the whole; I shall further add that, by the present you have animated and heightened my affections, which your former hospitable behaviour had before enkindled. Shall I tell you I constantly and fervently pray for you, and am daily forming a thousand wishes for your present and future welfare? Dear sir, I need only say you have won my heart by your favours; I bless God for what you have done for me, and am surely to conclude from this instance of your bounty that you will be a great friend to me and my family. Dear sir, I thank you, and again I thank you. On Saturday last I received your parcel. Immediately I had my hair cut off, that I might have the honour on the Sabbath to appear in your wig; and being desirous to wear the black coat once, for your sake, went to the meeting in it. My body was never so genteelly arrayed since it came out of the hands of its Creator; the clothes fitted me well, and looked gracefully upon me. Dear sir, I thank you, and again I thank you.

Was proud to tell Mr. Ashworth what a present you had sent me; Mr. Ashworth seemed quite pleased. Indeed, if anybody who had seen me in my ragged and dirty apparel two years ago, had seen me last

Sabbath so decently clothed in your things, would have been apt to think me the reality of one of Ovid's Metamorphoses, there being so striking a difference between my past and my present appearance. Dear sir, I thank you, and again I thank you. To conclude, dear sir, you say in your last letter, "I have sent you some clothes, if you will not refuse them." Dear sir, what do you mean? I am surprised at your expression. If you had sent me an old pair of shoes or stockings, I should have been obliged and very thankful for them, much more so for a present so large and rich as yours, the value of which I so well know, and I am persuaded they were never yours for ten pounds. Dear sir, if at any time you have an old garment to spare, hat or anything else, I shall receive it with thanks, and my family enjoy the benefit of it. What follows I am ashamed to write, yet must own that your present would have been more complete if you had obliged me with a waistcoat along with it, having not one proper to wear with the coats you have sent me, they being so valuable, and fit me so well, it would be a pity to break them for that. I have nothing to add but an expression of the sincerest and most prevailing concern for your real happiness, and am, dear Sir, what I shall always be proud to call myself, and my wife and boys with me, your highly benefited and greatly obliged and humble Servants,

JOHN & MARY, THOMAS & JOHN BUTT.

P.S. The hand, spelling, and composing am sensible, is wretched, time being short, matter great, tackle bad and obliged to write in haste.

As I have had my hair cut off, and at a loss for a cap, if you have one to dispose of, either silk or velvet, shall be very glad of it.

GOLDEN HAIR.—Mr. Erasmus Wilson, in his new *Journal of Cutaneous Medicines and Diseases of the Skin*, is eloquent on the "Dangers of Dyeing the Hair." "Art," he tells us, "is progressive; a few years back, when the mania for altering the shade of colour of the hair first broke out, ladies were content with washing their heads with an alkaline solution, soda or potash, until a considerable portion of the colouring matter was removed, and with it, of course, much of the freshness and silky beauty of the hair. This bleached hair, which ap-

proached artificial or dead hair in its qualities, was then polished with a little oil, and the process was complete. But chemistry has now enabled the artisans of hair to move a stage onwards; to add a dye in the place of the abstracted natural colour, and to convert the head into a kind of coloured mop. It comes to pass thus: the head is washed with an alkaline solution, and dried near the fire; this part of the process occupies an hour. The manipulator then brushes through the hair the dye, an acid solution of varying strength, and the exhausted and dry hair is made to absorb this fluid by the aid of hot tongs and hot plates of metal. This latter part of the process demands care and skill, and time also it would appear; for our informant, the lady operated upon, reports that the whole proceeding occupied seven hours and a half. But at last came the result, not the end, but the beginning of the end. When the lady rose from the operating chair, she was charmed by the vision of a pale gold chevelure, her natural colour being a dark brown; and she went to her home in perfect delight. But in a very few hours the vision began to change, first to a bright orange-yellow, and then to a deep yolk of egg yellow that was perfectly hideous. To correct this evil, another operation was to be gone through, another seven hours and a half of tedious and painful manipulation; and this time, like the last, with a similar result,—first the golden sheen of the rising sun; but, as evening advanced, a deep saffron and red tint like the setting sun portending a coming storm; or, rather, like the efin locks of the demons of a pantomime. The lady's disappointment and vexation may be more easily imagined than described; she was advised that nothing more could be done; that, if she disapproved of her present appearance, her head must be shaved; and she submitted to the necessity and to the consequent annoyance of wearing a wig. The proceeding we are now discussing is called the 'instantaneous' process, and we have styled it an operation, having in our mind a surgical undertaking; the suffering was so severe, says our informant, that she was obliged to scream with pain, the burning was so intense that she walked about the room in a frantic state; and sal volatile was administered to keep up her strength. More than a week after this grave operation she came to us to be relieved of inflammation of the scalp, and the effects of a superficial gangrenous burn. She complained of a feeling of lethargy, and feared that some poisonous matter might have been absorbed through the scalp into the system; and it was clear that her nervous system had undergone a serious shock, and that she had escaped by a very narrow margin from an attack of deranged function of the liver verging on jaundice. On the sixteenth day after the operation the gangrenous burn remained unhealed.